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HISTORY OF  
GRAND FORKS COUNTY.



With Special Reference

TO THE

FIRST TEN YEARS      ☼      ☼  
OF  
☼      ☼      GRAND FORKS CITY.



Including an Historical Outline——

Of the Red River Valley.

BY H. V. ARNOLD.

LARIMORE:

PIONEER OFFICE.

1900.



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GOVERNMENT TOWNSHIP.

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## PREFATORY REMARKS.

THE history of the Red River Valley, so far as it has been published in this state, appears to have been confined to newspaper, magazine and other sketches. The next step is special pamphlets, and finally will come the bound books of the future. No really good history of the valley which will include the era of the settlements, can be written until some progress has been made in collecting facts of that character concerning each of the counties of the Red River tier. The history of that part of the valley south of the international boundary is chiefly confined to its North Dakota side, which, indeed, is the best portion of it in United States territory. The current of its history, however, also includes a strip of territory along the Minnesota side of Red River and which extends from Georgetown to Breckenridge. But the North Dakota side of the valley is specially historic ground, particularly its northern boundary around Pembina and Walhalla.

Any work, even in pamphlet form, purporting to be a history of any one of the counties of the Red River tier of North Dakota, must necessarily sift over the accumulating records that belong to the history of the valley in its entirety, for unless this be done, its old phase of life, the sequence of events and their bearing on the commencement of the modern epoch cannot be duly appreciated. The present is the outgrowth of past conditions; no hiatus, no abrupt transition separated the old phase of life in the valley from the commencement of the present civilization. Yet with the beginning of the latter account has to be taken of the great migration which has rendered this civilization a possibility. For a century past we have before us a rather continuous historic stream in the Northwest with which white men have been concerned.

At present the literature bearing upon this subject, is in a rather discordant state, unsifted, and more or less filled with erroneous statements of fact, including discrepant and wrong dates. These sketches merely supply a temporary want. It would, perhaps, be a mistake to imagine that any permanent harm has been done in the matter of these errors; on the contrary, the discrepancies being apparent to anyone of critical intelligence, the outcome will be to stimulate others to investigate the facts they handle more carefully, so as to eliminate and correct the mistakes of their predecessors in the same field, also bringing to light other and new facts.

A valuable series of articles on "Old Times in the Red River Valley," written by M. H. Morrill, were published in the Richland County Gazette in 1897 and '98; during the first half of 1898 another valuable series entitled "The Long Ago" collected by Chas. H. Lee, editor of the Walhalla Mountaineer, appeared in his paper and were subsequently issued in pamphlet form. More recently, the Grand Forks Herald, in a notable illustrated 40-page edition of June 27, 1899, commemorating its twentieth anniversary, was rich in respect to its historical contributions, and which were remarkable for their accuracy. The Record Magazine, of Fargo, formerly edited by C. A. Lounsberry, and more recently by W. F. Cushing, begun in May, 1895, has also since that date gathered a large fund of valuable historical and descriptive matter concerning the Red River Valley and state of North Dakota. Doubtless the files of the Northwest Magazine of St. Paul, contain many articles of similar character.

Numerous brief historical sketches concerning the city of Grand Forks were formerly included in special editions of the city papers and were also used in a few other works. The earlier history of Grand Forks has never been more than merely skimmed over, no attempt ever having been made in these publications to treat the subject in detail. The original nucleus of these sketches appears to have been an historical article that appeared in a large illustrated edition of the Plaindealer for Christmas week, 1890, if, indeed, it was not older. It is observable that the style and subject matter of that sketch has tintured all subsequent writings upon the subject. There was an historical sketch covering much the same ground and which appeared in the first number of the weekly Herald in June, 1879, but that of the Plaindealer appears to have been an independent production. The later sketches, although more or less amplified, as manipulated by different hands, all bear the stamp of the original exemplar.

manus. Mar. 27/25

Portions of the present work have been clipped from articles by the writer that have appeared in the *Larimore Pioneer* during the last several years, the parts here retained having undergone more or less revision. In treating of the historical outline of the Red River Valley the earlier numbers of the *Record Magazine* have occasionally been drawn upon for the basis of some of the facts narrated. As in the case of some other writers dealing with valley history, fragments from other sources have been now and then interwoven with the basis to round out paragraphs in respect to additional details, where these are not of the nature of extracts. In respect to the county history, much of it has been based upon the direct testimony of the Old Settlers, although contemporary records, always the best historical evidence, have been used so far as these have been obtainable.

Although great care has been exercised by the author in eliminating errors of statement and particularly erroneous dates from the materials used, it would be too much to claim that this work can be faultless in these respects. But whatever accuracy that portion of it may possess which bears upon the early history of the county and the city of Grand Forks, is due to the kindly help of the Old Settlers of the Red River Valley whose contribution of facts are acknowledged either in footnotes or by name in the text, though innumerable other points derived from them and others are inwrought into the various paragraphs of the last three parts of this work. In making these acknowledgments of assistance from others, we should also mention John Nelson, Register of Deeds of this county, in assisting us in an examination of the oldest records of his office; also W. P. Davies, city editor of the *Grand Forks Herald*, through whose courtesy we were enabled to look through the oldest bound file of that paper.

The author himself has been a resident of the county since May, 1880, and considerable matter has been incorporated in this work derived from his own personal knowledge and observations. Moreover, for many years past, much information covering innumerable points of local history, has also been derived from persons resident in and around Larimore. The inferences that have been drawn from any special fact, or group of facts, or comments on the same, are generally the thoughts of the writer.

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## ERRATA.

Page 1.—The figures for the 96th and 97th meridians should read 97th and 98th meridians. The error resulted from a slip of memory.

Page 2.—The breadth of the flat valley plain on the main line of the Great Northern Railway is at least thirteen miles wide. While the ten mile limit may be taken as a geological boundary, it is none the less certain that the district between the Elk Valley and Red River flats constitutes a distinct topographical land-belt of the county, although this may merge imperceptably with the valley plain. This correction also correspondingly modifies the stated breadth of this central land belt. See Note A, p. 127.

Page 11.—Altitude of Kempton, 1126 feet. should read 1127 feet.

Page 13.—“Comparative few Indians.” The first of these words should read Comparatively.

Page 103.—E. O. Steelman, now a resident of Elm Grove township, states that he was of the party who emigrated from Minnesota to Turtle river in June, 1878, but arrived at Grand Forks about ten days later than the others. H. A. Morgan came through with a team of horses the next fall. Edward Wheeler, it seems, was not an original settler, but bought out the claim or right of a colored man named James Hawarden.

Pages 106 and 107.—The names of certain settlers of Inkster and Strabane townships given as Casey, Congrave and McEwen should have been spelled Corey, Congram and McElwain. Mr. Inkster states that he removed to the Mouse River country in August, 1882, and not in 1885. See Note H.

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## PART I.

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### DESCRIPTIVE SKETCH.

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#### GENERAL DESCRIPTION.

##### POSITION AND BOUNDARIES.



THE NORTH and south row of counties, six in number, that border the eastern side of the state of North Dakota, constitute what is called its "Red River tier." Grand Forks county occupies nearly a midway position in this row, being fourth in order from the south. The county is bounded north by Walsh, east by Red river which also forms the dividing line between Minnesota and North Dakota, south by Traill and Steele, and west by Nelson county. The 48th parallel of latitude crosses the county about four miles to the north of its medial line, and its area is almost wholly included between the 96th and 97th meridians.

##### DIMENSIONS AND AREA.

The county has an average length of 40 miles from east to west, yet there is a difference of about twelve miles between the length of its southern and northern boundary lines, which is chiefly due to the westerly trend of Red river where this stream flows abreast of the county. The south line touching Traill and Steele counties has a westward extension of about 47 miles from the river; and the north line touching Walsh county extends 35 miles west from the river. As there are six rows of townships between these two boundary lines, (Towns 149 to 154 inclusive) they give the county from south to north a breadth of 36 miles. The county is divided into 42 townships, thirty-six of which correspond with the surveyor's or government townships, the remaining ones being those that border on Red river, or the parts of the congressional townships accruing to the county by being bisected by this stream. The county contains 921,600 acres, or 1,440 square miles. This is a little more than the total land area of the little state of Rhode Island.



## TOPOGRAPHY AND DRAINAGE.

The hundreds of counties in the Union differ widely in respect to their topography or surface features. Their surfaces vary from those that lie broadly level to those that are mountainous in their physical aspect. The presence of lakes, river valleys, outcropping ledges of rock, forests and wooded hills, creates variety in the scenery and beautifies the landscape. In this county the differences in altitude are such as to have caused very marked changes in the form of the surface were these elevations converged nearer together so as to have given rise to steep hill sides or abrupt declivities; but this is not the case here.

The surface of Grand Forks county is partially level and partially rolling, but, on the whole, has a gradual ascent from the river to the height of the upland country, the surface being more prominent in tracts of successively higher elevation than any other form. A line drawn from the city of Grand Forks across the center of the county to its western verge would cross four separate land belts, or districts in which somewhat different topographical conditions exist. First and lowest comes the Red river flats, a level prairie plain next to the river, and which extends outward about ten miles on this line. Second in order, there occurs the midway slope of the main valley, a gradually ascending and gently rolling tract of about sixteen miles in width. The third land belt is the "Elk Valley," a level prairie district that is four miles wide on the line now under consideration. Lastly there comes the upland country, a district more rolling than hilly, which, within the county limits, is eight miles across on its medial line.

Toward the southern border of the county the form of the surface is nearly similar to that just described for its medial line, but with these variations: A narrower width to the flat valley plain, a greater breadth to both the midway slope and the Elk Valley, and the inclusion of a wider portion of the upland country within the county limits.

In the northern part of the county, along its north tier of townships, the lay of the land varies a little from that already described. Here the flats extend somewhat farther west than in the southern half of the county; then a long, but slight ascent of the surface toward the west occurs, with an occasional slight ridge, until west of Inkster the land further rises in a considerable ridge; between this elevation and the uplands there is a shallow valley (the northern extension of the Elk Valley) and west of this the uplands rise to their usual height, their altitude being nearly uniform through the west part of the county, but the breadth of this hill district in this part of the county is less than the distance across a township.



On the whole, the surface of the county is mainly of the nature of a gradual or very gentle rise westward from Red river, attaining a height of over 600 feet in forty miles. It is not exact to state that the county is a vast level plain. But such ascent as exists, is not an uniformly smooth rise; were it so, this would only average fifteen or sixteen feet to the mile. Some of the slopes are several times greater than this, but no very rough features exist in the county. The lowest land is presumably in Turtle River township; the highest in the county is some one of the elevated swells of the uplands, the extreme variation in altitude not being far from 650 feet.

The topography of any county chiefly determines its drainage directions. The drainage of Grand Forks county is chiefly from the uplands to Red river east by north, but with variations from this direction in some parts of it. The central part is drained by Turtle river, a small stream with several smaller affluents. To the north of the Turtle the slope of the land is more directly toward the east than the course of the stream itself, but in the northern part of the county, within a limited area, the drainage slope is northward to Forest river. This stream is mainly confined within the limits of Walsh county, but its upper reaches intersect Inkster and Strabane townships of this county. In the eastern part the drainage is both northerly to the Turtle and east to Red river. In its southwestern part, the drainage is from the uplands toward the southeast or by way of Goose river, the principal stream of Traill county.

On the eastern slope of the uplands, the drainage lines are in the form of coulees, or narrow, winding ravines, some of which are several miles in length, fifteen or twenty rods wide, and forty or fifty feet deep, but dry through most of the year, though they sometimes contain through the summer pools and little trickling streams. There are a few small streams in the county, mere rills or brooks, which, after flowing several miles, disappear in the ground by absorption of the water, or in other cases, enter small ponds or marshes without permanent outlets.

The flowage of streams in this part of the Northwest is considerably less than would otherwise be the case, were the country largely covered with forests and underlaid by strata of bedrock at a moderate depth from the surface, neither of which factors are present here. But these facts have their bearing on the cultivable area of the county, there being no great amount of waste land in it, resulting either from thickets, marshes or hilly tracts.

#### THE VALLEY PLAIN.

The valley plain forms a very extensive belt of level prairie land lying next to the river, and, in this county, it extends outward eight to twelve miles distant from the stream. The "Red

River flats," as these lands are sometimes called, correspond to the alluvial bottom lands of many bluff hemmed western rivers, which usually have much less width than the Red River Valley. The land has a slight rise toward the west, two to three or more feet to the mile, or sufficient to insure drainage and prevent the flat land becoming a morass. The streams crossing it flow merely in channels sunk fifteen to twenty feet below the common prairie level. The altitude of Grand Forks is 830 feet above sea-level, and taking into consideration the slight westward ascent of this land and the northward descent of the valley of about one foot to the mile, the average elevation of that part of the valley plain comprised in this county would range about ten feet higher than the site of Grand Forks. This land has a deep and rich alluvial soil entirely free from stone.

"The Red river has cut a channel twenty to fifty feet deep. It is bordered by only few and narrow areas of bottom land, instead of which its banks usually rise steeply on one side and by moderate slopes on the other to the lacustrine plain, which thence reaches nearly level ten to thirty miles from the river."\*

A very marked feature of the northwestern country is the timber belts that fringe the banks of the larger streams and to a considerable extent those of their tributaries. Belts of timber line both banks of Red river, following in a sort of zig-zag or sinuous course, the windings of the stream, but as seen across country from a distance of several miles, it appears to form instead a dark band against the horizon that trends away to the north and south in nearly a straight course. This is all the more distinct in winter by contrast with the snow clad valley plain. There are points in the county, where, from the higher land, the timber belt along Red river can be discerned at a distance of twenty to thirty miles.

#### THE MIDWAY SLOPE.

There is a broad belt of boulder clay land running north and south, or bearing a little northwest and southeast, through the middle part of the county. It comprises the gentle slope of the Red River valley between the Elk Valley and uplands on the west, and the valley plain on the east. This land belt also extends through Traill and Walsh counties, and where it is transversely crossed by any of the tributaries of Red river, they flow in considerable sized valleys containing timbered bottom lands of limited extent, and as the streams have no very small amount of fall while crossing this belt, they have many rapids in boulder strewn channels, with occasional reaches of slack water. To the south of Turtle river, this district is gently undulating, or

\* The Glacial Lake Agassiz, by Warren Upham, Monograph of the United States Geological Survey. Washington, 1895, p. 20.

characterized by low, broad ridges. Between Larimore and Ojata and on the line of the Great Northern Railway, the descent of this slope amounts to about 275 feet. The western 1,000 feet contour line of the Red River Valley passes through this county along this slope between Emerado and Arvilla, and within one mile of the latter place. It approaches nearer to the river in the southern part of the county, and recedes more away from it to the north of its central part. This land belt has a sandy, but fertile surface loam and boulder clay subsoil. Its western portion is 1,100 feet above sea-level.

#### THE ELK VALLEY.

Persons living at a distance, and who are unfamiliar with this part of the county, are apt to suppose from its designation that the Elk Valley is the basin of some stream. From McCanna south to Goose river this land belt is more of the nature of a bench, or second prairie level of the main valley slope than an actual valley, since between the points named, it is bordered only on one side of it by any prominent rise of the land. On its western border, the uplands constitute a prominent terrene, sufficiently marked to characterize one of the slopes of a broad and deep valley. Beyond McCanna the continuation of the Elk Valley is bordered on the east by a considerable ridge, hence this part of it may properly be called a valley.

The Elk Valley, taken in its entirety as a physical unity, is confined within the limits of three counties, hence it will be convenient to describe it as a whole, notwithstanding its extension and projection into Walsh and Traill counties, and division under two different local names. But mere local names do not imply any change of physical conditions, while geological boundaries are very apt to disregard civil boundaries.

To the west of the center of Walsh county there occurs a broad ridge, which is quite distinct from the uplands, and has nearly a north and south trend. Its location relative to the uplands is a few miles inward from the base of the latter. The ridge has some extension into the northern part of Grand Forks county or through the townships of Inkster and Agnes, reaching about to Turtle river. It is not continuous, since it is interrupted at several points by sags and depressions, including the passage through it of the Forest and the south branch of Park river. The ridge varies from about one half mile to  $2\frac{1}{2}$  miles in breadth, its broader portions having an undulating contour of the surface. It widens toward the north and becomes more narrow and less prominently marked toward the south. Its western slope rises from 25 to 30 feet above the enclosed valley, with a larger amount of descent upon its eastern slope. Where the south branch of Park river cuts through this ridge, it forms a gorge a quarter of

a mile wide and from 75 to 100 feet deep, along a distance of  $1\frac{1}{2}$  mile.

In Walsh county the long, shallow depression between this ridge and the uplands is called the Golden Valley. As confined to Walsh county, it varies from  $4\frac{1}{2}$  to one mile in breadth, being contracted to this lesser distance at one point toward its northern termination. From the north branch of Forest river it has a northern extension of eighteen miles, and from the same point southward, so far as anything of the nature of a valley exists, it has a farther length of about sixteen miles. This sixteen mile stretch may properly be called the Elk Valley.

Its southerly continuation through Grand Forks county and overlap into Traill county, covers a distance of 35 miles, and as stated, this portion of the tract is of the nature of a second prairie level, not being enclosed on the east by any prominent rise of ground. As mapped out, this portion of the land belt is in the form of an elongated key-stone, or of an estuary to a river, and varies from four or five to ten or twelve miles in breadth. This part is called by Warren Upham, "The Delta of the Elk Valley." This is in relation to its geological formation. The most of this tract forms a level prairie belt along the base of the uplands, which, at Larimore, is four miles wide. There is but little rise of the level part of this land belt toward the uplands and what ascent exists is confined to a fringe of territory a mile in breadth along their base.

As a geological unity the whole tract, valley and prairie, has a total length of about 70 miles, with a very slight ascending slope from south to north, which is the reverse of that of the main valley. This is shown by the fact that Mayville and Portland in the neighborhood of the southern termination of this delta deposit have an altitude of 978 and 983 feet, respectively, while the northern end of the Golden Valley is about 1,200 feet above the sea, and intermediate points have a gradually increasing elevation northward. Around Larimore the land has an average altitude of 1,130 feet, with variations of a few feet above and below this level.

The soil of the Elk Valley is a fertile, sandy clay loam, the percentage of sand contained in it being of a fine sort rather than coarse grained. The subsoil is a sandy bed of clay, but this is not everywhere present. Like the soil of the valley plain, that of the Elk Valley is free from boulders, and more porous.

#### THE WESTERN ESCARPMENT.

The western side of the Red River Valley in North Dakota and the Canadian provinces is bordered by a notable escarpment, much more conspicuous than the corresponding one on the eastern side of the valley. That on the west forms a second,

and for some portions of the valley, a third prairie level, which is the case in this county. This escarpment is separated at intervals by the entrance into the Red River Valley of streams from the west, which in turn have wide valleys. These separated portions of the common escarpment bear specific names, as Pembina, Riding and Duck mountains. Along the upper portion of the valley from Lake Traverse northward for about one hundred miles, this escarpment is low, possessing only a moderately ascending slope, but farther north, and also in the Canadian Dominion, its height increases, both above Red river and sea-level. Toward Lake Traverse the altitude above sea-level is about 1,200 feet, gradually increasing to 1,500 feet in the Pembina mountains, and towering to an elevation of 2,700 feet to the west of Lake Winnipeg. From the head of the Coteau des Prairies north to Pembina county, this escarpment bears no specific name, being called sometimes the "uplands," but more commonly the "hills."

This escarpment forms the western verge of the Red River Valley. Its height forms a gently rolling upland country of a wide area, extending westward toward Devils lake. Between Larimore and Devils Lake city, the surface nowhere exceeds an altitude of 1,535 feet on the railroad line. The hill country, within the limits of Grand Forks county, is commonly stated to have an elevation of 300 feet above the Elk Valley, and has about the same altitude within the limit just specified, as that of the village of Niagara, which is 1,440 feet above sea-level. Some of the swells of the surface are likely to be more elevated.

The comparatively small portion of the upland country within the limits of this county, constitutes about one-sixth of the area of said county. There are practically five of its townships that are included in its hill district, and also parts of several others. The soil is a gravelly clay loam of decomposed glacial drift, well mixed with organic matter, and makes fairly fertile land.

#### GEOLOGICAL FORMATION.

The Red River Valley is underlaid at a considerable depth below the surface by strata of limestone, sandstone and shales of Cambrian age. At or below the base of the Cambrian there is also a thick rock stratum of a doubtful kind but generally classed as archæan, called Laurentian granite. Above the Cambrian are strata of upper and lower Silurian age but these rocks do not appear to extend up the valley as far as the center of this county. Still nearer the surface, but more particularly beneath the higher land in the county, there exists a great body of marine clays and shales of middle and upper Cretaceous age. These latter series are overspread by the glacial and modified drift beds, which, with the topsoil, forms the surface deposits of the valley.



In the western part of the county the uplands consist almost bodily of alternating beds of blue clay and soft shales. Collectively, these Cretaceous strata are about one thousand feet in thickness. The depth of the overlying drift varies from merely nothing on the tops of the higher eminences to twenty or more feet in places on lower ground, but usually in the uplands the glacial drift amounts to only a few feet of boulder clay, with many scattered boulders at or near the surface. On the valley slope the drift has a greater thickness than in the hill district of the county. The boulders are of all sizes up to those of three to five feet in diameter, but in more rare cases a few are reported as being ten or twelve feet in diameter. They are usually of granite and associated rocks, with occasionally one of limestone. Some of sandstone occur here, but they are very rare. The "hardheads" came from the Laurentian axis of the continent around Hudson bay, and the limestone boulders are from the region around Lake Winnipeg.

The Cretaceous formation of the upland country was not only once continuous across the entire valley, but also was originally 500 or more feet higher, as much as that amount having been denuded from the surface prior to the Glacial period. The hollowing out of the valley itself dates from about the close of Pliocene times and was completed essentially the same as it is now, some minor rough surface features and a deeper basin excepted, when the Ice age began. The great width of the valley is due to the easily erodible nature of the strata in which it was excavated by rain and stream erosion.

Two of the land belts running through the county consist of sedimentary deposits more recent than the boulder clay. The oldest of the two in relative age is the tract called the Elk Valley. This is a delta deposit of sand and clay silt, formed by a temporary glacial river that came down from the Golden valley of Walsh county. This ice-born torrent flowed within a great rift of the icesheet, the part of the rift now represented by the delta then forming an estuary-like inlet to the glacial Lake Agassiz. The lake then filled the Red River Valley as far north as Grand Forks county, and was in process of lengthening northward to the country around Lake Winnipeg. The icesheet was probably about a half mile in thickness in the valley and during the epoch of the lake the ice margin was receding. The sediments of the delta extend from around McCanna to the vicinity of Mayville and Portland and also include some of the ridgy land along its eastern border. The average thickness of this sedimentary belt is about forty feet and Upham estimates its bulk at from  $1\frac{1}{2}$  to 2 cubic miles. Its lower part is so saturated with water as to form a quicksand, which is reached in wells from 12 to 24 feet in depth, and furnishes an abundant supply of very pure water.

The more recent land belt covering the glacial till of the valley, is the great bed of lacustrine and alluvial silt, that has filled its lower depression and extends from Wahpeton to Winnipeg. This forms the flat valley plain. In this county the formation extends from eight to twelve miles west from the river. Above the bedrock, according to Upham's view, most of the formation of the valley plain consists of glacial beds, with lacustrine clay above them that was brought into the lake by the streams while this ancient body of water was falling to low levels, and the remainder of the soil to the surface is alluvial, having been deposited by Red river during its flood stages.

But little of the sediments of the lake were deposited upon the midway slope, as this tract was much exposed to the erosion of the waves. Some of the soil was doubtless eroded from the eastern border of the Elk Valley delta. This land belt is marked by many successively lower beach ridges formed by the waves during as many periods of pause made by the receding waters while the lake was being drained away.

While the lake stood at its highest stage about five-sixths of the area of the county was submerged beneath the water. The western shore-line lay along the foot of the hills, about 35 miles west of the river. Only the upland district and parts of the ridge in Agnes and Inkster townships, which formed a chain of islands that was continued nearly through Walsh county, alone remained above water.

The physical cause of this great glacial lake was wholly dependent upon the closing stages of the Ice age. When the ice-sheet was melting away, year by year, its southern margin stretched across the valley of Red river, thus forming a barrier to the pent up waters that prevented them from flowing away in the direction that the natural slope of the land would have led them. The lake finally drained away by successive stages, marking either side of the valley with many recurring beach lines, or gravel ridges, at lower and lower levels.

#### ARTESIAN WELLS.

Grand Forks county does not seem to lie within the limits of any of the artesian basins of the Dakotas. Its flowing wells are small ones and none of them go to bedrock. They are, perhaps, nearly all confined to the valley plain and obtain their supply from the drift. There are a few with small flow in and around Ojata, several around Manvel and many in the Forest river drainage area in the northern part of the county. Two inch pipe is generally used, and the wells vary, approximately, in depth, from 60 to 270 feet. Efforts to obtain flowing water on the higher land have not been successful. The water of these wells is sometimes good but apt to be more or less saline.

The following record of a boring made at the Diamond Mill, Grand Forks, shows the character of the beds in this part of the valley down to bedrock. It was obtained through Prof. P. S. Berg, of Larimore, from Prof. Babcock, of the University.

Alternating clay and sand and gravel to.....	200 feet.
Alternating clay and coarse sand to.....	240 feet.
Alternating clay and sand to.....	305 feet.
Fine gravel at.....	305 feet.
Blue clay mostly to.....	370 feet.
Coarse sand and gravel from.....	375 to 380 feet.
Granite at 380 feet and penetrated for 15 feet.	

Depth of this boring, 395 feet.

Section of the Elk Valley delta at Larimore: Soil, 2 feet; sandy clay, 5 feet; yellowish sand, 13 feet; dark sand, particles two-thirds cretaceous shale, containing much water, 40 feet. Total, 60 feet. Hard blue till at the bottom of the delta.

#### THE MIRAGE.

Flat regions like the lower depression of the Red River Valley are subject to mirages, and these aerial phenomena are also occasionally noticeable on the higher land of the valley. The following account of the mirage, as commonly witnessed in the valley, is given here as described by Warren Upham:

"In crossing the vast plain of the Red River Valley on clear days, the higher land at its sides and the groves along its rivers are first seen in the distance as if their upper edges were raised a little above the horizon, with a very narrow strip of sky below. The first appearance of the tree-tops thus resembling that of dense flocks of birds flying very low several miles away. By rising a few feet, as from the ground to a wagon, or by nearer approach, the outlines become clearly defined as a grove, with a mere line of sky beneath it. This mirage is more or less observed on the valley plain every sunshiny day of the spring, summer and autumn months, especially during the forenoon, when the lowest stratum of the air, touching the surface of the ground, becomes heated sooner than the strata above it.

"A more complex and astonishing effect of mirage is often seen from the somewhat higher land that forms the slopes on either side of the plain. Thus, in looking across the flat valley a half hour or two hours after sunrise of a hot day following a cool night, the groves and houses, villages and grain elevators, loom up twice or thrice their true height, and places ordinarily hidden from sight by the earth's curvature are brought into view. Occasionally too, these objects, as trees and houses, are seen double, being repeated in an inverted position close above their real places, from which they are separated by a very narrow fog-like belt. In its most perfect development the mirage shows



the upper and topsy-turvey portion of the view quite as distinct as the lower and true portion, and the two are separated, when seen from land about a hundred feet above the plain, by an apparent vertical distance of 75 or 100 feet for objects at a distance of six or eight miles, and 300 to 500 feet if the view is fifteen to twenty miles away. Immediately above the inverted images there runs a level false horizon, which rises slightly as the view grows less distinct, until, as it fades and vanishes, the inverted groves, lone trees, church spires, elevators and houses at last resemble rags and tatters hung along a taut line.

"The traveler in the Red River Valley is reminded the same as at sea, that the earth is round. The surface of the plain is seen for a distance of only three or four miles; houses and grain stacks have their tops visible first, after which, in approaching, they gradually come into full view, and the highlands ten or fifteen miles away, forming the side of the valley apparently lie beyond a wide depression, like a distant coast."\*

#### COUNTY ALTITUDES.

The following table gives the elevation in feet above sea-level of each station on the railroad lines within the county limits. That for Merrifield has had to be estimated, but cannot be much if anything, out of the way.

Arvilla.....	1017	McCanna.....	1140
Bean.....	893	Mekinock.....	861
Emerado.....	898	Merrifield.....	850
Gilby.....	879	Niagara.....	1440
Grand Forks.....	830	Northwood.....	1119
Grand Forks Junction..	836	Ojata.....	858
Inkster.....	1036	Orr.....	1098
Johnstown.....	871	Park River Junction..	1133
Kelley.....	842	Reynolds.....	910
Kempton..	1126	Schurmeier.....	826
Larimore.....	1134	Shawnee.....	1232
Levant.....	822	Thompson.....	865
Manvel....	819	University.....	834

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\* The Glacial Lake Agassiz, pp. 21, 22.

## PART II.

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# HISTORICAL OUTLINE.

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### PRE-SETTLEMENT ANNALS.

#### THE TWO EPOCHS.



IT WILL now be proper to give a general outline of the old phase of life and the sequence of events in the Red River Valley from the earliest time of which we have any authentic date down to the period when the present generation first began to establish permanent settlements in this portion of the valley. In these affairs of the long ago, Grand Forks county was, to some extent at least, the scene. But from amidst the shifting scenes of this historic panorama there emerges one spot in the valley that becomes prominent as its historical focus, and that place is Pembina.

Without reckoning anything on the visits to the valley of Verendrye and Duluth prior to the middle of the last century, it may be said that the past hundred years of its history presents two very distinctly marked epochs. The first of these is that characterized by the domination of the fur trading interests, politically represented by the government of the country as exercised by the Hudson Bay company; the second epoch is that marked by the settlement of the valley by the present population, its development, and founding of the state of North Dakota and the province of Manitoba, with the organization of their respective governments; including also the occupation and development of that part of the valley that lies in Minnesota. This epoch has not yet been succeeded by any other, though an industrial and manufacturing era, to some extent, with a greater population, will be apt to constitute the characteristic features of the next epoch, while agriculture and its associated commercial operations will doubtless remain the chief sources of the wealth of the valley.

It must not be supposed that when the settlement of the valley by an agricultural population had its beginning, its old epoch abruptly terminated and its new one began. Generally speaking, there is no abrupt termination of any one epoch and beginning of another. A transition period will likely ensue. The old epoch insensibly shades into, and is absorbed by the new one, each having its characteristic phase of life. Radical changes may ensue so as to bring about another and different state of things, but these are the growth of time. There is a gradual, a slow change to new conditions, and no one can say just when a previous era has ended and a new one has been ushered in.

#### THE ABORIGINES.

In early times the plains of North Dakota formed a great range for the buffalo. The bison was a migratory animal, and in winter ranged southward to northern Texas. The increasing warmth of spring, which in that latitude ensues early, urged these animals to take to their northwardly leading trails, and they migrated in vast herds. By the month of June or earlier, they reached the Red River Valley.

The Dakotas, and much of the state of Minnesota, was formerly the domain of the allied tribes called the Sioux. The eastern part of this state was occupied by the Yankton sept of the Sioux nation, although the Wahpetons and Sissetons were located at Lake Traverse later than the middle of the century. In northern Minnesota were the Chippeways, and to the north of our boundary dwelt the Crees, Saulteaus and Assiniboines. These latter tribes were often at war with the Sioux and made the northern part of this state their battle ground. The Wahpetons and Sissetons were accustomed to make journeys to the north along Red river and as far as the Pembina river, to hunt the buffalo and to wage their predatory warfare against the northern tribes, including the Chippeways. During these journeys back and forth, the site of Grand Forks was one of their convenient camping places and an advantageous point to lay in wait for the scalps of members of the last named tribe.

The Indian tribes between the Mississippi and Rocky mountains largely derived their subsistence by hunting the buffalo. These animals furnished them with robes and, in a measure, a living. But people in the savage state who depend on hunting and fishing for subsistence can never form communities comprising a numerous, much less a dense population. Their mode of life, exposure and liability to famine and their almost constant warfare with other tribes, has a tendency to thin their numbers.

"Comparative few Indians" says Warren Upham "were able to derive their subsistence by hunting and fishing upon the area of Lake Agassiz or in any other region. Probably their number

living at any one time upon the portion of the lake area within the United States did not exceed 5,000.\*

#### MOUND BUILDERS.

At a period that was long anterior to the occupation of this region by the hunting tribes that were known to the whites, there lived other tribes here of whom Upham remarks that they "probably lived more by agriculture and less by the chase," and who built the mounds found in the country, to some extent, by the first settlers. The builders of these mounds appear to have been offshoots of the ancient race known by their works as the Mound Builders. Where they were the most numerous, as in the Ohio and Mississippi valleys, they were sufficiently advanced to make rude pottery, build fortifications on a large scale, also temple mounds and other earthworks. They also fashioned native copper obtained in the Lake Superior region, or picked up more sparingly from the glacial drift, into various utensils, but they do not appear to have been able to smelt it. They must also have possessed considerable skill in other arts, but at their best the superiority of the Mound Builders that occupied the Red River Valley over the later Indian tribes was but slight, and even in the Mississippi Valley their handicraft was not at all comparable to that of the aboriginal races of Mexico and Peru.

It seems to be pretty well established that the Mound Builders were not racially distinct from the Indians and were probably the ancestors of tribes that were still existing within the present century, as the Mandans, for example. This early progress of the red race was probably due to intercourse with Mexico and Yucatan, also to early migrations of the race from those countries. Such advancement as they were making appears to have been interrupted several hundred years before the discovery of America by reason of the appearance east of the Mississippi of the bison, an event in the animal world that changed the population from semi-agriculturists into bands of nomadic hunters, thus terminating any farther progress toward civilization.

Relics of the occupation of this part of the state by the later Indian tribes, notwithstanding their recent possession of the country, have not been so abundantly found here as in some of the middle western states where the red men evidently were more numerous. Still, since the settlement of this state, arrow-heads, tomahawks, mortars and pestles and other stone implements have been picked up on the prairies in considerable numbers. It should be remembered that the states in which these relics of aboriginal life have been most abundantly found were originally more or less forested, and in wooded districts the implements were more easily lost than in the open prairie regions. More-

\* The Glacial Lake Agassiz, p. 616.

over, the prairies were annually burned over by the Indians, and until the grass grew again, things lost upon the surface were easily seen and recovered.

#### THE FUR COMPANIES.

In 1670, the Hudson Bay Fur company was granted a charter by Charles II, of England, giving to Prince Rupert and fourteen other members, their heirs and assigns, the right to the sole trade of the region around Hudson and James bays. The company began to establish themselves on these bays toward the close of the same century. Nearly a century more, however, passed before we read of the Red River Valley being occupied either by this company or by any other of which the members were British subjects. In the meantime exploring and trading expeditions of the French, coming from Canada by way of the Great Lakes, penetrated the Northwest as far as the Red River Valley and even much farther west.

About the year 1679, *Sieur DuLuth*, who was conducting trading operations in the country around the head of Lake Superior, made a brief and probably hasty expedition across northern Minnesota, reaching some point inland about Lake Winnipeg.

After *DuLuth*, *Sieur Verendrye*, his sons and nephew *Jeremaye*, next penetrated the country to the valleys of the Red, Assiniboine, Missouri and Yellowstone rivers for the purposes of trade and exploration, and they built a post or two on the Assiniboine. These operations were continued between the years 1731 and 1743. The conquest of Canada by the English in 1759 terminated French exploration, but the work of the missions and operations of individual traders still continued.

The first settler on North Dakota soil is claimed to have been a Canadian French trader who located at Pembina in 1780. While his name has not been preserved, the fact is nevertheless mentioned by Prof. Keating, the chronicler of Major Long's expedition. This party found the trader still living at Pembina 43 years subsequent to the period of his location at that place.

In 1784 *David Thompson*, a person of some scientific attainments, entered the service of the Hudson Bay company and was appointed clerk. Later he was employed by the Northwest company as explorer and geographer. He was also an accomplished astronomer. In 1797 he visited the valleys of the Red, Assiniboine, Mouse and Missouri rivers. He was also sent by the Northwest company to visit the Missouri and the sources of the Mississippi for the purpose of making geographical and astronomical observations. In 1798 he was at Cass lake, in Minnesota, and fixed the latitude of the company's post at that point. He also fixed and recorded the latitude and longitude of many points throughout the Northwest.



The Northwest Fur company was organized at Montreal in 1783. Their chief stronghold in the Northwest was Fort William on Lake Superior, now Port Arthur. Here, every autumn, the *coureurs des bois*, or men of the woods, and other employees of the company were accustomed to gather, spend their earnings for liquor and luxuries, and hold high carnival. The Northwest company controlled most of the fur trade of the Red River Valley. Capt. Alexander Henry, an officer of this company, came to the valley in 1799 and was engaged in establishing trading posts. In the winter of 1797-8 a Canadian French trader named Chabollier built a post at Pembina, but when Capt. Henry visited that point in 1800, he found the post unoccupied, and proceeded to establish his headquarters there,

About this time Capt. Henry had a post built on the Pembina river about nine miles below the point where the stream issues from the Pembina mountains, which in those times were called the Hair hills. This post was soon afterward removed farther up the river to the vicinity of the site of St. Joseph, now the village of Walhalla, where, as Captain Henry says, "the waters of the Paubian leave the steep hills."

On September 8, 1800, Capt. Henry selected the site for a trading post on the plain between the Red and Park rivers, and not far from the mouth of the latter stream. One year later, to wit, in September, 1801, he sent a party of men to build another on the site of Grand Forks. This post, however, was not long maintained.\* At this time Capt. Henry's party consisted of eighteen men, four women, and four children. Of the men, one was his clerk, and another acted as interpreter in dealing with the Indians. The same month and year, Thomas Miller, of the Hudson Bay company, with eight Orkney men arrived at Pembina and established a post on the east side of the river where Emerson now is. Agents of another organization called the X. Y. company also appeared in that part of the valley at this time, and for awhile maintained a post on the Pembina river. In 1801 also, the Red River cart was devised.

The canoe, the travial and the dog-sledge seem to have been the only means of communication prior to the introduction of the Red River cart. At first Captain Henry considered

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\* It is a question in the mind of the writer whether Captain Henry ever established a trading post on the site of Grand Forks at all. He was one of the few men of that period who thought it worth the effort, while in the country, to keep a record of their movements and observations. His journal is carefully preserved in the Government Historical Library at Ottawa, Canada, and only extracts from it seem to have been published. His references to the "forks of the river" appear to have meant the confluence of the Red and Assiniboine, that is, the site of Winnipeg. It is therefore doubtful, whether or not, there has been some misunderstanding as to the location meant by him, unless he specially designates the forks of Red and Red Lake rivers as the site of this post.

them to be a great improvement on the means of transportation previously in use, but two years later he says in his journal that the introduction of horses and carts into the country had the tendency of making the employees of the company more lazy and shiftless than before.

In 1806 Captain Henry visited the country about the Mouse and upper Missouri rivers. He speaks of Pembina affairs again in 1808, when, besides the annual shipment of peltries, there was exported from the country 3,159 pounds of maple sugar. That year the Rocky mountain locust made one of their periodical visits and swarmed over the country. Captain Henry came to an untimely end. Having gone west of the Rocky mountains, to which region the Northwest company had extended their operations, he was drowned in the Columbia river, May 28, 1814.

#### THE SELKIRK COLONY.

From the beginning of the century the Red River Valley began to be occupied and traversed by the trappers and voyageurs of the fur companies, and soon afterward by a few independent traders. But a different class of people now came to the valley. These were the Selkirk colonists and their coming is the next important matter in valley history after the operations of Capt. Henry. This colony was composed of Highlanders who had been evicted from the estate of the Duchess of Sutherland, in the north of Scotland. Says Warren Upham:

"The first immigration of white men to colonize the fertile basin of the Red River of the North, bringing the civilized arts and agriculture of Europe, was in the years 1812 to 1816, when, under Lord Selkirk's farsighted and patriotic supervision, the early pioneers of the Selkirk settlements, coming by way of Hudson bay and York Factory, reached Manitoba and established their homes along the river from the vicinity of Winnipeg to Pembina. In its beginning this colony experienced many hardships, but, in the words of one of these immigrants, whose narrative was written down in his old age, in 1881, 'by and by our troubles ended, war and famine and flood and poverty all passed away, and now we think there is no such place to be found as the valley of Red river.' " \*

In 1811, Thomas Douglas, earl of Selkirk, having gained control of the Hudson Bay Fur Company interests so far as to enable him to do so, secured a tract of 116,000 acres of land in the Red River Valley on which he designed to plant his prospective colony. Its first contingent arrived in 1812. The lands on which they settled included the site of the city of Winnipeg which was founded about sixty years later. About the year 1814 the locusts

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\* The Glacial Lake Agassiz, p. 612.

destroyed their crops and want drove them to the post of Pembina for food and shelter. But the Northwest Fur company were opposed to the settlement of an agricultural population in the country. They instigated their employees to annoy and harass the colonists in many ways. About 150 of them they induced to desert, and the remainder they tried to frighten away by setting their halfbreed employees upon them disguised as Indians. In 1815 another contingent of the colonists arrived from Scotland. The Northwest company now endeavored to expel them from the country. An affray ensued at Seven Oaks near the site of Winnipeg, in 1816, in which about twenty persons lost their lives, among whom was the Hudson Bay governor Semple. Lord Selkirk now interfered, protecting his colony by force of arms, and re-imbursed them for the losses of property they had sustained. The hostile criticism evoked by these troubles finally led to the coalition of these antagonistic fur companies, which was effected in 1821. In that year the first Fort Garry was built.

The success of an agricultural colony such as this was, mainly depends upon favorable climatic and physical conditions, also a fair degree of competency to obtain subsistence from the region colonized, upon accessions in number, both to counterbalance losses and to increase the population, and largely, besides, upon the adaptability of the colonists themselves to adjust their mode of life to the usual changed conditions of new settlements. The Selkirk colonists found a fertile soil in the valley that was in strong contrast with that of the partially sterile and mountainous region of the north of Scotland, well adapted to agricultural pursuits, and a country possessing a healthy and tolerable climate. Coming from a high northern latitude in their former homes, the long days of summer and short ones of winter in their new abode presented no marked contrasts; but the physical aspect of the country they found to be far different, and climatic conditions considerably so. Already inured to hard conditions of life in their old homes, they were the kind of people to succeed and were deserving of the fair measure of success to which they ultimately attained.

Gradually the colony began to see some measure of prosperity. Other additions came from time to time, and they began to enlarge and extend their settlements. In 1821 two hundred Swiss emigrants arrived, who had been induced to leave their native country by an agent of Lord Selkirk. The colonists built churches and established schools. They maintained amicable relations with the Indians from whom they purchased more land, extending their settlements up the Assiniboine and up Red river as far as Pembina. Their settlements were compact, the individual holdings being six chains in width, and extending back from the river two miles on each side. They had mills for grinding grain,



spun their own wool, wove their own cloth, and made their own clothing. To guard against losses by locusts and drought, they were accustomed to keep three years supply of food and forage on hand. Though liquor was to be had at the posts, intoxication among them was almost unknown. Presbyterians in Scotland, they maintained their religious integrity in this country. Notwithstanding their privations and hardships and the dangers they were called upon to face, they succeeded in establishing in this remote part of the continent a sturdy civilization.

There was but little communication between the colony and the old world. A vessel or two arrived about August of each year bringing the goods ordered before by dog-sledge packet to Montreal. They had mail from Great Britain but once a year. It is related of Alexander Murray, a colonist of 1812, that he was a subscriber to the London Times, which had been issued under that name daily since January 1, 1788, and that he received a full yearly volume when the ship came. He was accustomed to read one copy a day, that of the corresponding day of the previous year, and thus he kept up to within one year of the daily record of current events occurring in the old world.

#### ISOLATION OF THE COUNTRY.

While these events were in progress, that is to say throughout the first two decades of the century and, of course, earlier, the Red River Valley was so isolated from the United States that even the geographers of the eastern states seem to have known little or nothing of it. The school geographies of those days were like school readers, mainly descriptive, having no map questions, and containing a crudely engraved map or two, uncolored, and folded into the book. Jedadiah Morse, the father of one of the inventors of the telegraph, published the first American geography for the schools of this country, in 1789. An examination of the editions of 1807 and 1811, in possession of the writer, shows no knowledge of Red river as a stream of the United States, nor can this be expected, since the region west of the Mississippi river is spoken of as comprising "unknown countries." Jonathan Carver, an American traveler of the last century heard of the Red river from the Indians while wintering among them at the mouth of the Cottonwood, and calls it a capital branch of the River Bourbon, that is, of Nelson river. But during the two decades under consideration, certain official and commercial classes in Canada and England were in possession of a larger amount of information concerning this then far off north-western country than was, at that time, known to the government of the United States.

"The war of the Revolution," says N. H. Winchell, "which left the east bank of the Mississippi in possession of the United

States and the west bank in the possession of the French, operated not only to terminate English and French exploration, but to retard that of the United States. It was not till after the cession of Louisiana by France that the government of the United States instituted measures for the exploration of the unknown countries west of the Mississippi, when in 1804 Captains Lewis and Clarke were despatched to explore the Missouri river and Lieutenant Z. M. Pike to ascend the Mississippi to its source. Lieut. Pike found the upper Mississippi country occupied by trading posts of the Northwest Fur company over which was still flying the English flag, a fact which attests the isolation of that region since the peace concluded in 1783."\*

#### MAJOR LONG'S EXPEDITION.

Between the years 1818 and 1823, Major Stephen H. Long, of the United States Army, had charge of the exploration of the country between the Mississippi and the Rocky mountains. In the latter year he was directed by the Secretary of War to proceed to Pembina and establish the international boundary at that point. Several scientific gentlemen of Philadelphia, among whom was Prof. William Keating, of the University of Pennsylvania, accompanied the expedition. The Italian traveler, Beltrami, a political exile from his own country, also joined the party at Fort Snelling.

Major Long's party arrived at Fort Snelling July 2, 1823; on the 6th Prof. Keating, Beltrami and other gentlemen of the party, visited the Falls of St. Anthony, which then existed in their primeval condition; and on the 9th the expedition set out for the Red River Valley. Proceeding in canoes up the Minnesota river, they abandoned this mode of conveyance at old Traverse des Sioux, and the remainder of the journey to Pembina was made by marching. After crossing Nicollet county, Minn., to Redstone, so as to cut off the great bend of the Minnesota river, the route pursued was up the course of the stream, the march being more upon the prairie above the south line of bluffs than along its valley bottoms. They reached Big Stone lake on July 22. Here Major Long met and held a conference with Wanata, the chief of the Yauktons. After passing Lake Traverse, the line of march was next down the west side of Red river along which route the old Red River trail was struck out some years afterward. This took the expedition through Grand Forks county and in the vicinity of the river. The party reached Pembina on the 5th of August. This was the upper settlement of the Selkirk colony, and a number of families were located around this place. The trading post of the Northwest company, established

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\* Geological and Natural History Survey of Minnesota, vol. i. p. 25.

there in 1800 by Captain Henry, had been maintained down to within a few months of the arrival of Major Long's party. He found about three hundred halfbreeds there living in sixty log huts, and the traders located there possessed about two hundred horses. The day after his arrival, the buffalo hunters came in from the chase, forming a procession consisting of 115 carts each loaded with about 800 pounds of buffalo meat. After several days observation the boundary was located and marked by setting up a few oak posts. On August 8th, the American flag was officially displayed at Pembina for the first time, and proclamation made that all land on the river south of the established boundary was United States territory.

Hitherto, the colonists at Pembina had supposed themselves to be in British territory, but finding themselves really between one and two miles south of the boundary line, they, being intensely loyal to the British crown, abandoned their holdings and removing farther north, they settled at Kildonan, a few miles from the modern city of Winnipeg. The Italian traveler, Beltrami, considering himself discourteously treated by Major Long, separated from his party at Pembina. Procuring a halfbreed and two Chippeway Indians as attendants and guides, he traveled southeast to Red Lake river, thence up to Red lake, from whence he sought the sources of the Mississippi river, by no means an easy task to accomplish in those times single handed. He next passed down the "Father of Waters" to New Orleans, and having returned to Europe, he published in London a book of his travels in 1828.

After leaving Pembina, Major Long's party descended the river to Lake Winnipeg, thence ascended the Winnipeg river to the Lake of the Woods, and returned to the United States by way of the Rainy Lake region and Lake Superior. Major Long was born in 1784, lived to an advanced age, and died at Washington in 1864. Beltrami died in 1855.

Prof. Keating was the historian of this expedition. He embodied the notes and manuscripts of different members of the party in a work of two volumes, which was published in London in 1825. Accompanying Keating's work was a map compiled from the observations made during the progress of the expedition and from various other sources of information. On this map the names and location of the streams tributary to Red river appear for the first time. On the whole, Prof. Keating's work "may be correctly pronounced the first attempt to apply the accurate methods of modern science to the exploration of any portion of the Northwest."\* Major Long's official report was not published until some time after the appearance of Keating's work. He ap-

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\* Geological and Natural History Survey of Minnesota, vol. i. p. 34.

pears to have been the first person who ever made any authentic report concerning the Red River country to the government.

In 1824 a family of the name of Tilly going from Pembina to Fort Snelling, was murdered near the site of Grand Forks by a band of Sioux Indians, who carried two children of this family, both boys, into captivity. The facts being made known to the commandant at Fort Snelling by a trader, a scouting party was sent from the fort to the valley in 1826 and rescued the children. In the early part of the present decade, one of the rescued boys, having lived to become a man of advanced age, died in New Jersey.

The earl of Selkirk had died in the year 1820. Six years later, to wit, in 1826, a great flood occurred in the lower valley that effected his colony and which appears to have been the earliest one of which we have any record. On May 2d the waters rose nine feet, and on the 5th the plains were submerged. The waters continued to rise until the 21st, doing considerable damage to the property of the colonists. Houses, barns, bodies of drowned cattle, household furniture, amidst logs and uprooted trees moved down stream on the surface of the raging waters, and one night the house of a colonist floated by in flames, forming an impressive spectacle to the awe struck beholders. The Swiss contingent of the Selkirk colony, becoming discouraged and dissatisfied with the country by reason of the losses they had sustained from the flood, left the valley that year and removed to Minnesota, journeying to their destination by way of the lakes and streams of that state. They numbered 243 persons and became the first settlers upon and around the site of St. Paul.

#### OLD TIMES IN THE VALLEY.

For the next dozen or more years following the flood of 1826, there seems to occur a sort of hiatus in the history of the valley. At least, we have been able to find but little that has been recorded which pertains to those years. Probably no expeditions visited the country during that interval.

During each recurring summer there ensued the annual buffalo hunt, the chief event of the year. The hunting parties of the Northwest assembled at some appointed place between June 8th and 18th. Sometimes as many as a thousand or more persons took part in these hunts, their caravans at times consisting of as many as 600 carts. The hunters were accompanied by their women and children. They were mainly halfbreeds, with some Indians and occasionally a few whites. Bands from some of the posts in Manitoba also joined them. Scouts were first sent out to locate the herds, and on their return, the leaders having heard their reports, they determined from them the direction of the march to the prairies. The buffalo ranges of the Northwest

were along the Sheyenne, the Mouse, the neighborhood of the Turtle mountains, and the upper portion of the Red River Valley. Reaching any one of these ranges, the hunters attacked the herds on horseback, using long stocked guns with flint-lock fire, and slew the animals in large numbers. The remainder of the herd stampeded away with a loud noise, raising a great cloud of dust. The men skinned the slain animals for their hides, and the women assisted in cutting up the meat and loading it into the carts for transportation to camp where it was cut into strips and dried for winter's use, and for making pemmican. The tongues of the buffalo were considered a choice part of these animals. Though not as choice as beef, buffalo meat nevertheless formed the chief article of food on the plains. The hides were brought to the posts for shipment with other peltries.

The pemmican, the only kind of bread known to the Indians, was made by cutting up the meat in long thin strips, drying and smoking it over a slow fire as it hung on racks made of small poles, and it was next placed upon the flesh side of a buffalo hide, whipped to fine shreds with flails, and then mixed with hot tallow in large kettles. The thick, pliable mass was then poured into sacks made of buffalo hide, holding from 50 to 150 pounds according to the size of the skin, and would keep many years when hung up so as to allow the air to circulate around them. When used, the pemmican needed no further preparation, or it could be cooked with vegetables in several different ways.

The aristocracy of the plains consisted of the officers, traders and clerks at the posts, and the buffalo hunters. While the Selkirk colonists generally dressed in homespun clothing and lived plainly, the men at the posts had every luxury that they could procure, including a stock of the finest liquors. The importation of some of the finer products of civilized life gradually became more common, even to silk dresses for the women of the posts. In dress the trappers and voyageurs, or canoe men, and some other of the employees of the fur companies used a common sort of cloth that was imported, gray suits being much worn by them. With these classes, including the halfbreeds, there was also some admixture of vestments made of the skins of animals, especially buckskin.

The buffalo was the harvest of those days—running the buffalo, making pemmican and shipping furs. Trapping was the business of the spring, buffalo hunting in the summer and fall, and in the winter the trappers, hunters and voyageurs devoted their principal attention to living and they lived right royally on the fruits of the summer's chase.\* Those with many succeeding years constituted the "good old buffalo days."

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\* This and the three preceding paragraphs are mainly based upon various sketches in the earlier numbers of *The Record Magazine*.



The guns used in the Northwest were made in England specially for purposes connected with the fur trading business. They were imported by way of York Factory and exchanged at the posts for peltries at certain values. They continued to have flint fire locks long after the percussion cap had come into general use, on account of the great distances to the points at which the caps might be obtained. If an Indian or other hunter happened to get out of his supply of percussion caps, on the supposition that he used a percussion fire gun, it might be a hundred or more miles from the nearest post, in which case his piece would be of no use to him, while a flint-lock gun was generally serviceable at any time.

There were some salt springs in the valley that were utilized to some extent by the Selkirk colonists and the fur companies, on account of the expense of importing salt. "Considerable quantities" says Warren Upham "were yearly made by the evaporation of the water of salt springs. One of these springs from which much salt was made for the Hudson Bay company is situated in the channel of the south branch of Two Rivers, about  $1\frac{1}{2}$  mile above its junction with the north branch, and some six miles west of Hallock. It is exposed only when the river runs low, and in such part of the summer the work of salt-making was done."\*

During the period mentioned above life in and around the trading posts continued the same as it had been. The country, the surroundings, the mode of life of the people, and its object, was of that character which admitted of but little change from one generation to another. The Selkirk colonists also continued their simple and isolated mode of life, having at last attained a fair measure of prosperity and happiness, and but little mindful of the continual progress and irresistible advancement of that westward tide of emigration, which, both in Canada and in the United States, was destined in future years to close in upon them and merge their descendants amidst the present population of the Northwest.

#### JEAN N. NICOLLET.

Jean N. Nicollet was a Frenchman in the service of the bureau of topographical engineers. After exploring the basin of the Mississippi in the south with its western affluents for geographical and natural history purposes, he was next assigned to the region of the upper Mississippi. These latter explorations covered the period between the years 1836 and 1843. Lieut. J. C. Fremont was Nicollet's principal aid and assistant. Fremont was born in Savannah, Ga., in 1813, consequently he was merely a young man while in the service of government under Nicollet.

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\* The Glacial Lake Agassiz, p. 628.

his fame as an explorer of western wilds being still in the future. But he was thus early gathering a profitable experience as an aid to Nicollet.\*

The interior of Minnesota was now more thoroughly explored than it ever had been since the visits of the French explorers of the two preceding centuries, or of that of the American traveler, Jonathan Carver. The chief object of Nicollet's expeditions was for geographical purposes, as he and his party mapped out the streams, lakes and land heights, locating these physical features of the country in respect to their latitude and longitude as accurately as their imperfect appliances would admit of being done. Nicollet's party was again in the field during the warm season of 1839. Passing up the Missouri river, they left its banks in the vicinity of Pierre, S. D., early in July, and struck out for the Devils Lake country. At first the party traveled northeast to the James river, which was then called the "Riviere a Jacques." On reaching this stream, its valley was followed north to Bone hill in LaMoure county, N. D., whence the expedition crossed over to the Sheyenne. This stream was followed up toward Devils Lake where the party arrived in the latter part of July.

Several days were spent in exploring and mapping out the shores of the lake and all prominent physical objects in its vicinity. Its western end, however, was not visited, but the party traversed both its north and south shores to considerable distances toward the west. The lake lay in the country of the Yankton Sioux. The salinity of its waters was noted and Nicollet designated the country around the lake on his published map as a "salt water region."

On August 6, 1839, the party were at Stump lake, which Nicollet calls Wamduhika, its prevalent Indian name. Thence the party with its military escort marched eastward as far as the western part of Grand Forks county, probably camping on the night of August 8th near the center of Moraine township. Although headed toward Red river, the expedition next day wheeled about at nearly right angles to the line of march since leaving Stump lake and passed southward to explore and map the physical features of the Coteau des Prairies. This took the ex-

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\* Nicollet was born in the village of Cluses, department of Haute Savoie, France, in 1786. He studied astronomy under La Place, and in 1817 he was appointed secretary and librarian of the Paris observatory. With a good equipment of the physical knowledge of his time, he came to the United States in 1832, and entered the service of the Bureau of Topographical Engineers. So far as the historical sketches relative to North Dakota have come under the writer's notice, Nicollet has never received that recognition which his services entitle him to, or to speak more truly, almost no recognition at all. The allusions to his expedition are coupled with Fremont's name and that of Nicollet ignored, thus creating in the mind of the reader a false impression as to the officer in charge. Nicollet died at Washington in 1843, while his report on his explorations was undergoing revision for the press.

pedition through what is now Steele county, some distance to the west of where Mayville and Portland now stand. It was more to Nicollet's purpose to penetrate and explore a region hitherto but little visited, than to traverse the level plains of the valley already mapped and described by Major Long and Prof. Keating.

Nicollet's map was published by government in 1842. It was called the "Map of the Hydrographical Basin of the Upper Mississippi River." It covered the entire states of Minnesota and Iowa and portions of the other states that adjoin them. In respect to the physical features of the country, it was rather minute for one of that period, and in later years Gen. G. K. Warren pronounced it "one of the greatest contributions ever made to American geography."

N. H. Winchell, in his historical sketch prefixed to the "Geological and Natural History Survey of Minnesota," makes the following remarks on Nicollet's methods and work: "He aims to locate correctly, by astronomical observations, the numerous streams and lakes, and the main geographical features of the country, filling in by eye-sketching, and by pacing, the intermediate objects. His methods, allowing for the imperfection of his appliances, and the meagerness of his outfit and supplies, were established on the same principles as the most approved geodetic surveys of the present day. It would, perhaps, have been well if the methods of Nicollet could have been adhered to in the further surveying and mapping of the territories. Their geography would have been less rapidly developed, but it would have been done more correctly. Nicollet's map embraces a multitude of names, including many new ones, which he gave to the lakes and streams."

#### A BUFFALO HUNT.

As has been stated, white men sometimes accompanied the halfbreeds to the buffalo ranges, either to participate in or to witness the slaughter of these animals. Alexander Ross describes a hunt which he witnessed near the Sheyenne, and in the vicinity of the site of Fargo, in 1840. He writes: "At eight o'clock the cavalcade made for the buffalo; first at a slow trot, then at a gallop, and lastly at full speed. Their advance was on a dead level, the plain having no hollow or shelter of any kind to conceal their approach. Within four or five hundred yards, the buffalo began to curve their tails and paw the ground, and in a moment more to take flight and the hunters burst in among them and fired. Those who have seen a squadron of horse dash into battle may imagine the scene. The earth seemed to tremble when the horses started; but when the animals fled it was like the shock of an earthquake. The air was darkened, and the rapid firing at last became more faint as the hunters became



more distant. During the day at least two thousand buffalo must have been killed for there were brought into camp 1,375 tongues. The hunters were followed by the carts which brought in the carcasses. Much of the meat was useless because of the heat of the season, but the tongues were cured, the skins saved and the pemmican prepared."

#### TRADERS AND TRAPIERS.

As time in its course neared the middle of the century, communication between the valley and the outside world became all the more frequent. Cart routes leading to the head of navigation on the Mississippi began to be established by the traders, who, independent of the American and the Hudson Bay fur companies, had begun to locate at Pembina, St. Joseph and a few other points in the Northwest. At first, the objective point of these cart trails was Mendota, near Fort Snelling, but St. Paul having gotten its first start about the year 1846, the cart trains with their great packs of buffalo robes and bales of mink and other skins thereafter went to that place. Here the steamboats took the peltries for shipment to St. Louis. In these enterprises the famous Joe Rolette first appears.

Joe was a noted trader of those times. He was born at Prairie du Chien, October 23, 1820, his father, who was a native of Quebec, having been an Indian trader of note in the early days of Wisconsin. In early life Joe was sent to New York to be educated under the supervision of Ramsey Crooks, president of the American Fur company. On his return to the west, he entered the service of his father in the fur trade. General Sibley was then residing in a stone built house at Mendota, which was his headquarters, and he had charge of the company's fur trading business in the Northwest. The elder Rolette died in 1842, and about that time the general sent Joe to Pembina in connection with the company's interests there, and he came in company with his mother's brother, a Mr. Fisher, who had spent the most of his life trading with the Indians. Thenceforth Joe made Pembina his future home.

In 1843 Norman W. Kittson, who was a relative of Captain Henry, and in modern times a wealthy railroad official of St. Paul, also came to Pembina and began laying the foundation of his subsequent large fortune. In connection with Rolette, he established a trading post at Pembina, and removed in 1852 to St. Joseph, being associated there for awhile with a trader named Forbes, and a little later with Charles Cavileer.

Only six carts went from Pembina to the Mississippi in 1844, but with the passing years this small number increased to some hundreds as the trade developed. The establishment in the Red River Valley of distinctively American traders, whatever their

ancestry may have been, led to the diversion of a part of the fur trade of this region to the head of navigation on the Mississippi. This trade had an important influence on the founding and early growth of St. Paul. Some say that it was the making of that city, but a large metropolis would have risen upon that site had there been no fur trade, since conditions pertaining to physical geography and other factors had already determined that question.

The American traders at the Red River posts suffered great losses from time to time from the aggressions of the Hudson Bay company's men. They also furnished the Indians, in the way of traffic, with large quantities of whiskey, which the American traders were forbidden to do under severe penalties. In vain did Kittson protest and remonstrate and ask for protection and redress. General Sibley could not help him and the government would not. At last, in 1847, some Canadian traders came near Pembina and set up a post two miles from Rolette's, and sent out runners to the Indians that they wanted their furs for money and whiskey. Before they had fairly begun operations, Rolette took a dozen or so of his plucky retainers, halfbreeds for the most part, marched against the intruders, tumbled their goods out of their buildings, and burned them to the ground and drove the traders and their retainers back into Canada.\*

The streams of the Northwest were everywhere traversed by the voyageurs in the employment of the fur companies, and their banks were familiar to the trappers and hunters of those times. Probably most of the tributaries of Red river bear the names that these adventurous men applied to them. The Hudson Bay company engaged men from Canada, Scotland and England as employees in the varied services of the fur trading business, and many of them spent the remainder of their lives in the company's service. The Canadian French element predominated. All of them were men of vigorous, hardy constitutions, and their lives and labors were full of hardship and often of excitement and peril. Out of every hundred, at least forty, it has been computed, perished through the perils that beset their dangerous mode of life. But the men liked the business and the places of those who lost their lives by untimely deaths were soon filled by others. In the absence of white women many of these men took Indian wives, and there grew up around the trading posts a numerous progeny of halfbreeds. At one period this element in the population of North Dakota and Manitoba must have numbered about 3,000.

The voyageurs, trappers and hunters led a gay, joyous, but, on the whole, rather hard and dangerous sort of life, remote from most of the conveniences, comforts and luxuries of civilization.

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\* From a sketch written for the Minnesota Historical Society by Judge Flandreau.—The Record Magazine, July 1895.

But little concerning their adventures and perils was ever left upon record. During the warm season of most every year the buffalo ranged over parts of the Northwest in immense herds and elk, deer, antelope, coyote, fox, beaver and many varieties of smaller animals were more or less common denizens of this region, and it was occasionally frequented by the bear. The hides and skins of these animals were eagerly sought after, as collected by the trappers, hunters, Indians and halfbreeds, by the agents of the fur companies and by the independent traders. Some of the skins were rated more valuable than others on account of rarity. The great bulk of the packs and bales of furs annually shipped from the country consisted of buffalo hides notwithstanding the fact that there was a vast amount of other peltries also collected besides.

The cart brigades started for St. Paul in the latter part of June and were a month, more or less, in making the down trip, according to the weather and the condition of the trails. "For shipment" says Charles Cavileer in one of his sketches "the robes were packed, ten robes to the pack, using the wedge-press, making as compact a bale as the screw-press, but requiring more labor. Of furs, there were 500 skins to the pack, of mink, muskrats, martin, fishers, skunk and all small animals. Of bear, foxes, wolverines, lynx, there were twenty to the pack. When not having enough for the regulation bale we made mixed packages, endeavoring to make all bales as nearly as possible of the same size and weight, in order that we might correctly estimate the weight of the load of the cart. From eight to ten packs were carried on each cart."

The Red River cart consisted of two strongly constructed wheels with large cylindrical hubs each bored through with a large hole for the axle, heavy oak rims or felloes four or five inches thick, an axle with straight phills, a bottom of boards or poles and a frame around and above the bottom about two feet high. They resembled, at least in form, the two wheeled cart of the whites. They were made mostly of oak, the wheels were not banded with tires of any kind, and no iron whatever was used in their construction. In place of nails and bolts, wooden pins were used for the fastenings. The carts were used, eighty or a hundred in long strung trains which was called a brigade.

DAVID DALE OWEN.

In 1848 Prof. David Dale Owen, a distinguished geologist of a past generation, visited the Red River Valley. He had been appointed the previous year by government to make a geological survey of Wisconsin, Iowa and Minnesota. Its primary object was to derive information for the removal of such lands as were valuable for their mineral resources from sale in the land office at Washington. Owen had a large number of assistants and his

report was published in 1852. In coming to the valley, he made a canoe voyage down Red river as far as Lake Winnipeg, and also passed up the Pembina river as far as the vicinity of Walthalla. In what is now the western part of Pembina county, he examined the great delta of the Pembina river, called the First Pembina mountain, formed there during the highest stages of the ancient Lake Agassiz. Owen surmised from the appearance of the Red River Valley that in some past epoch this great basin had been the bed of a fresh water lake of large proportions, but neither its physical cause nor the extent of the country it had covered were then known nor for many years afterwards.

#### MAJOR WOODS AND CAPTAIN POPE.

In the summer of 1849 Major Woods was despatched by the Secretary of War to the Pembina settlement for the purpose of selecting the site for a military post. He was accompanied by Captain John Pope, of the Engineering Corps, who made a valuable report on the country that was traversed by the expedition. This left Fort Snelling on June 6th, proceeded up the Mississippi valley, thence across Minnesota by way of the Sauk valley and Lake Osakis, reaching the Red river at a point about fifteen miles below the site of Wahpeton, having followed through Minnesota a cart route already well traveled by trains of Red River carts that went from Pembina to St. Paul. Crossing to the west side of the stream the remainder of their journey was down the valley in the footsteps of Major Long. On account of the near approach of the seventh decennial census of the United States, Major Woods had been ordered by Gov. Ramsey, of the territory of Minnesota, to take it for the Pembina settlement. He found in and around this place 295 males and 342 females, the most of this population presumably being halfbreeds. In 1840 the traders had 1,210 carts and at the time of the taking of Woods' census the number must have been many more.

Major Woods with the most of his party returned up the valley by the trail that they had followed down the same, but Captain Pope organized a secondary expedition at Pembina and returned up stream in canoes for the purpose of examining the river. He notes the streams that enter Red river from either side. Those between Pembina and the mouth of Red Lake river are stated by him to be as follows: Two Rivers, Park, Marais No. 1, (from the east) Big Salt, Marais No. 2, (from the west.) Turtle, Marais No. 3, (from the east) and a small stream called Coulee de l'Anglais. The Park, Big Salt and Turtle he states to be about eighteen yards wide, and the Red Lake river as being fifty yards in width near its mouth, fourteen feet deep, and as having a more rapid current than Red river. He placed the head of navigation on Red river at the mouth of the Bois des Sioux.



In speaking of the country Captain Pope says: "The valley of Red River is entirely alluvial in its formation, no rocks in place being found in its entire length within the territory of the United States. It abounds with bowlders or erratic blocks of granite, which in all cases are very much rounded by the action of water. They are most abundant upon the highest ridges of the prairies, and cause all the rapids in the small streams tributary to Red river. About seventy miles to the north of our frontier a secondary limestone appears at the falls of Red river, which is unquestionably the basis of the whole valley, but at what depth below the surface it is impossible to say."

Captain Pope's error in supposing that the partially rounded form of bowlders, really chiefly due to glacial agency, was the result of decomposition aided by running water or any form of fluvatile action, was but that of his time. His speculation respecting the bedrock of the whole valley being the same Silurian limestone that outcrops below Winnipeg, is but little borne out by the records of artesian wells that have been bored at many different points in the valley within the last dozen years. The limestone beds beneath the valley are of different epochs, and wherever present at all beneath the flat land of its lower depression, are apt to be overlain by successive beds of shale, though this is not invariably the case. The depth down to bedrock on the valley plain and through soil, clay, sand and gravel, varies, approximately, from 100 to 400 feet. And the first rock struck may be either shale, limestone, sandstone or Laurentian granite, according to locality. . (For this county see pages 7-10.)

Captain Pope also states that there were then three different cart routes leading from the Red River Valley to St. Paul that were used by the traders and trappers of those times. These constituted a southern, middle and northern route. The first was by way of the Minnesota river to Big Stone lake, often taking to the prairies instead of following the valley bottom; the other two led as one up the Mississippi valley and then diverged, the middle route following the course of the Sauk river and across country to the site or vicinity of Fort Abercrombie, this being the route of the expedition; the more northern route was by way of Crow Wing valley, passing around the north end of Otter Tail lake and reaching Red river at the mouth of the Buffalo river. These divergent trails passed down to Pembina on either side of Red river. In crossing Minnesota, where the country was partially wooded, they followed the prairie as much as possible.

#### THE FIRST POST-OFFICE IN NORTH DAKOTA.

The first post-office in this state was established at Pembina about the year 1849. Previously, the Hudson Bay company had been forwarding their mail destined for Canada and England,

twice a year, spring and fall, by special messengers or carriers to St. Paul, from whence it was forwarded to its destination. Each half year the mail as gathered from the company's numerous outposts consisted of a thousand or more packages. From England mail still came by ship through Hudson Bay.

Kittson interested himself in the establishment of a monthly mail between Pembina and St. Paul. The mail was to leave Pembina the first of each month for Crow Wing village, but there was no specified time as to its arrival at that place or at Pembina on the return trip. The route was by way of Thief river, Red, Cass and Leech lakes. The carriers were halfbreeds, and the mail was forwarded either way by cart trains in summer, a part of the way by canoe, and by dog-sledges in winter. Joseph R. Brown was contractor for the route between Pembina and Crow Wing, another route already being in use from the latter place down to St. Paul.

Norman W. Kittson was appointed postmaster sometime in 1849. In 1851 Charles Cavileer came to Pembina and a few days after his arrival there was appointed assistant postmaster by Kittson and did all the business of the office. By that time the transportation business of the country had increased to such an extent that the government established a custom-house at Pembina and Charles Cavileer was appointed collector. The custom-house was one of the log buildings of the place, as was also the post-office. Arrangements were also made with the Hudson Bay company to deliver their mail at Pembina and have it forwarded from that point.

#### POLITICAL REPRESENTATION.

From 1849 to 1858 this portion of the Red River Valley was a part of Minnesota territory. Originally a part of the Louisiana purchase, the changes of name and of boundaries of the northwestern country down to the time Minnesota territory was created, were many, as this region became attached to one or another of the successive territories that from time to time were being formed. When the territory was organized on June 1, 1849, St. Paul, which became its capital, was nothing more than a village and at that time mainly dependent on the northwestern fur trade, while Minneapolis was not, as yet, founded, the site on the west side of the river then being a part of the Fort Snelling military reserve. Northwestern Minnesota and the Red River country constituted the Pembina legislative district, and although the white population was scant, it was presumed that it was entitled to be represented in the territorial legislature. The district does not appear to have been represented in the first and second sessions of the legislature, nor to have voted in the first and second elections for delegate to Congress. But in 1852, at the third



session of the territorial legislature, Norman W. Kittson was elected to the council (senate) and Anton Gingras to the house.

In the election of 1853 there were 128 votes cast at Pembina. In this election Rolette, Gingras and Kittson were sent to the legislature, the two former to the house and the latter to the council. For several years thereafter, Rolette was sent to the legislature, in 1855 as a member of the council. "Joe was a trader without method and with but little idea of the value of money, and if the whole truth were to be told it would appear that the opposition traders sent him to the legislature in order to take him away from his business and leave the trade open to them, without his competition, which was entirely too sharp."

It was during the session of the winter of 1856-7 that Rolette saved the capital of Minnesota to St. Paul. A bill providing for its removal to St. Peter had been introduced by W. D. Lowry, member of the council from St. Cloud, and had passed the council February 12, and the house February 18, 1857. It only needed the signature of Gov. Gorman, who had been appointed by President Pierce to succeed Gov. Ramsey, to become a law. Rolette was chairman of the committee that had the matter in charge, and the session being within five days of its close when he received the bill on the 27th, he made away with it by absenting himself from the session, and, with the connivance of friends who were hostile to the project, he secluded himself in his room at a hotel called the Fuller house. Tradition states that these friends of Joe got him intoxicated, and detained him at the hotel in that way. These interested in having the bill become a law made strenuous efforts to have Joe found, but without avail. Unable to report a true bill for the governor's signature, the legislature adjourned and the project of removing the capital fell by the wayside.

#### THE GRIP OF THE FUR TRADE.

The vast region now comprised in the Canadian provinces to the north of our boundary was controlled by the Hudson Bay Fur company. As the charter granted to the original company had never been annulled, the region in question could be opened up to general settlement only by an act of Parliament that would terminate their control over this region. On the other hand, the portion of the valley within the United States could be occupied by settlers at any time, subject only to the extinguishment of Indian titles, which, in this case, was effected about as early as any need of actual settlement required it. Both the agents of the fur company and the independent traders were doubtless opposed to the opening up of the country on either side of the boundary line so long as they could by any means prevent or hinder its inevitable occupation.

The colonization of a region in which the larger game, and the smaller fur bearing animals abound, leads to the gradual extinction of the fur trade. When such a region begins to be settled, the larger animals quickly retire before this first wave of advancing civilization; then, a little later, as the settlements spread and agriculture and its associated commercial operations are introduced into the newly occupied country, the smaller ones lessen in number, or, as in the case of the beaver, entirely disappear. Hence the reason of the hostility that the Northwest Fur company exercised toward Lord Selkirk's colonists in 1815 and 1816. They saw in the planting of this colony in the wilderness a menace to their business and its profitable gains. Had not Lord Selkirk possessed the requisite influence, the province of Manitoba would never have contained an agricultural population for nearly sixty years later, than, in this instance, happened to be the case.

The fur traders of later times are believed to have circulated exaggerated reports respecting the rigors of the climate so as to deter emigration to the valley. In the nature of the case, considering the steady and continuous west-by-north movement of the surplus population of the northern states, ever on the increase by the yearly arrival of thousands from Europe, the possession of the Northwest by the fur traders necessarily became limited in time, being one of those conditions of life, which, both in the Canadian Dominion and in United States territory, must sooner or later reach its destined end, and be terminated, either by peaceable or violent measures. The former method happily prevailed, but, in the meantime those engaged in the fur trade held a close grip upon the country. It is apparant that they preferred that things should remain much as they had been and continue so as long as it was possible to maintain this phase of life. This long period of seventy or more years duration, devoted to the fur trade in the Red River Valley, has very aptly been called the "halfbreed epoch." Its duration was too long for it to be classed as an incident in the history of the Northwest.

In 1857, the English House of Commons took the initial step toward opening the British possessions in North America in the control of the Hudson Bay company to civilization and unrestricted commerce. The committee having the matter in charge reported in favor of terminating the control of the Hudson Bay company at the end of their then 21 year term expiring in 1869.

In 1857 the Hudson Bay company completed arrangements with the Secretary of the Treasury of the United States whereby goods for that company could be carried in bond through the United States, thus practically doing away with the Hudson bay post known as York Factory, to which goods were then being shipped, vessels arriving and departing once a year. In the sum-

mer of 1858 two or three shipments of goods were so made, leaving the Mississippi river at St. Paul and conveyed thence by Red River carts under the direction of James McKey.\*

As soon as boat navigation on the northern lakes and streams opened in the spring, the company's fleet of Mackinaw boats was put into active service. These boats had a capacity of about five tons each. There were distant posts on the Saskatchewan, Athabasca and Mackenzie rivers to which supplies had to be forwarded that had come by vessel from England the previous year, and was brought by the boats up as far as Norway House near the foot of Lake Winnipeg. Leaving Fort Garry, the boats took down to Norway House the collected stores of furs, which, for the time being, were left at this post, then reloading with the supplies mentioned, the boats passed up the Saskatchewan, some of them going as far as Edmonton. On their return to Norway House they brought back the winter's catch of furs forwarded from the distant posts, and taking on the boats again the peltries that had been left there, they proceeded down Nelson river to York Factory where a vessel was ready to ship these collected stores to England. Reloading with the cargo that the vessel had brought over, the boats returned up to Norway House where the goods were stored as first mentioned, and then returned to Fort Garry, by which time September had come. Boats merely going from Fort Garry to York Factory and back, could make two round trips a year. Meanwhile, such stock of furs as had been collected at Fort Garry after the departure of the fleet in the spring, was forwarded through the United States. The freight taken through this country in bond, was merely for the supplying of Fort Garry and its outlying posts.†

#### FORT ABERCROMBIE.

In 1858 a military post called Fort Abercrombie was founded on the west bank of Red river fifteen miles below the site of Wahpeton. The fort was laid out in August, and was occupied but one year, when Secretary of War Floyd, as a part of his plan to despoil the North of government property and supplies and prepare the south for rebellion, dismantled the fort, sold the buildings at a great sacrifice, and withdrew the troops. In 1860 the post was again occupied and rebuilt under charge of Major Day, and maintained until the building of the Northern Pacific railroad rendered its farther occupation unnecessary.

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\* Sketch by Capt. Russell Blakeley —We do not know in what publication this valuable historical article on the opening up of the Red River Valley first appeared; but it is contained in *The Record Magazine* for April, 1897; also "The Long Ago," pp. 36-40. The sketch is also nearly all used in this work, but owing to our plan of following Red River Valley history in as strict chronological order as conveniently possible, it has been necessary to use it in detached paragraphs.

† From information furnished by John Cromarty, of Larimore.

About the time the fort was established, speculative parties endeavored to create a number of townsites in western Minnesota, some of them being located on Red river. There being then so few white inhabitants in this region and the country undeveloped, these ventures, even if attempted in good faith, could not be otherwise than unsuccessful.

#### REDMEN BURY THE HATCHET.

It was to the interest of the fur traders to keep the separate tribes of Indians at peace with one another as much as possible, but in this undertaking they were not always successful. In the fur trading days the allied tribes of the Sioux were the deadly enemies of the Chippeways (also spelled Ojibways) and the more northern tribes. About the year 1858, members of these tribes, or of most of them, met on the plains of Nelson county, near Stump lake and agreed at this council to bury the hatchet. The pipe of peace was smoked, and they mutually agreed, one tribe with another, to cease from their murderous forays against each other. William H. Moorhead, one of the old timers of the Red River Valley who came in 1857, happened to be in the Devils lake region and was present at this peace council.

#### THE BEGINNING OF THE RED RIVER STEAMBOAT ERA.

About this time interest began to be taken by those engaged in commercial pursuits in the navigation of Red river by steamboats, since it was known that it had long been used to transport goods by the use of canoes. In October, 1858, Captain Russell Blakely, of St. Paul, accompanied by John R. Irvine, visited the Red River Valley for the purpose of examining into the practicability of navigating this stream by steamboats. Resulting from the report of Capt. Blakely the St. Paul Chamber of Commerce offered to pay a bonus of \$2,000 to whoever would place a steamboat upon Red river.

The Red River of the North is neither a wide nor deep stream, and is, or formerly was, practically navigable from Lake Winnipeg up stream as far as Breckenridge and Wahpeton. This, at least, in respect to the latter points, was practicable when the river was above its ordinary stage. After the founding of Moorhead and Fargo the bridges stopped the boats from going above those places. The river is very crooked in respect to its minor bends, increasing to a long stretch the distances that the boats had to travel over and above a nearly straight course such as the railroads in the valley now have. Thus, the distance from the mouth of the Bois des Sioux at Wahpeton to the international boundary is 186 miles by a straight course, and 397 miles by the numerous twists and turns of the river channel, yet in all this part of its course the river does not deviate from one side to the other of a meridian line more than five or six miles. At Wah-



peton the river at its ordinary stage is 943 feet above sea-level; the altitude of Lake Winnipeg is 710 feet, hence the fall of what has here been alluded to as the navigable part of the river amounts to 233 feet. For about 24 miles as the river runs, or twelve in a straight course next below the mouth of the Goose, the stream crosses a morainic belt of bowlder clay that extends across the valley here at this point, and its bed is obstructed with bowlders, forming the Goose rapids. The fall in this part of the river is twenty-four feet in its low water stage and fourteen feet during high water. These slight rapids were often a hindrance to the passage of the boats during any season of low water in the days of steamboat navigation.

The range between extreme low and high water at the different points named is as follows: Wahpeton, 15 feet; Fargo, 32 feet; Belmont, 50 feet; Grand Forks, 44 feet; Pembina, 40 feet, and at Winnipeg 39 feet. The maximum point of extreme high water, occurring only during occasional spring floods, is Belmont, in Traill county, where the river channel is narrowed between high banks of bowlder clay; the next point of extreme high water level at Grand Forks is connected with the entrance into the Red at that place of the Red Lake river. The years in which extraordinary floods have occurred on Red river, and been recorded, are those of 1826, 1852, 1860, 1861, 1882 and 1897.

The steamboat era on Red river may be considered as having had its beginning in 1859 and as practically terminating in 1886, in consequence of most of the boats having been driven out by the railroads by that time. There are two rather distinct periods to this era. The first came within the epoch of the fur trading business and was not helped by any settling or agricultural development of the country; the second period was coeval with the settling and earlier stages of the development of the valley. Of the earlier Red River steamboats, four of them have now become historic. These are the Freighter, the Anson Northup, the International and the Selkirk. For the present, we are only concerned with the first three of these boats.

#### THE EPISODE OF THE FREIGHTER.

The dates of many of the facts relative to Red River Valley history, as usually published in various pamphlets, sketches, etc., are very discrepant, though generally they vary but one year forward or backward of that which should be the correct one. But in respect to the last trip ever made by the steamer Freighter, they reach a perfect climax of confusion. While the general facts of the matter need not be called in question, the date of the attempt that was made to transfer this boat into Red river seems to be involved in almost hopeless entanglement. Manifestly, only one date to the incident here following can be the correct one, yet every year from 1857 to 1862 inclusive has been assigned

by different sketch writers as the one that terminated the career of this boat. In this respect, nearly every writer mentioning the circumstance, and assigning a date, is at variance with nearly every other. Moreover, some have confounded the Freighter with the Anson Northup, rendering a bad matter in respect to chronology still worse.

In the spring of 1859 or '60\* an attempt was made to transfer a steamboat from the Minnesota into the Red river of the North by passing it through the long trough connecting the valleys of these rivers and in which nestle lakes Traverse and Big Stone. The heads of these lakes are about five miles apart, but the low bottom land between them called Browns Valley, is occasionally sufficiently flooded in the spring so that they are connected together, although draining in opposite directions. It was known that on a few occasions laden canoes had made this passage from Pembina to St. Paul. A small steamer called the Freighter was then plying on the Mississippi and Minnesota rivers, with Capt. C. B. Thiemmens, master. The boat was owned by Capt. John B. Davis, of St. Paul, and is stated to have been a flat bottomed, square bowed affair, about 125 feet in length, of 200 tons burden, and was presumably of the stern wheeled style of build. Its owner seems to have conceived the idea of taking the boat into Red river in the manner above mentioned. Those directly interested in the enterprise were J. C. Burbank, Russell Blakely and associates, parties who about that time organized a company to operate a stage line from St. Cloud to the Red River Valley.

The Freighter was accordingly run up the Minnesota river during the spring rise, but the water subsiding, the boat grounded in the river channel and was left stranded about nine miles below the outlet of Big Stone lake.† It was then deserted by its crew, and one account says it was pillaged and nearly destroyed by the Indians. Capt. Davis afterwards stated that if he had started the boat off from St. Paul some three or more weeks earlier he could have gotten her through Browns Valley and into Red river with little trouble. The boat was afterwards sold for

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\* N. H. Winchell, a good authority, in the Geological and Natural History Survey of Minnesota, vol. i. p. 134, gives the date as 1859. Russell Blakely states that it was in 1860. This attempt to take the boat into Red river is said to have been an incident of a gold excitement that had broken out on the Saskatchewan. If this statement is correct, then the episode of the Freighter would have fallen in the spring following this gold craze.

† The distance to the place below Big Stone lake at which the Freighter was abandoned has been misstated nearly as often as the date. Warren Up-ham, who saw the remains of the hull of the boat in 1879, and states that the boat was burned after being abandoned, adds that the locality where she grounded is near the east line of Section 33, Odessa township, Big Stone county, Minn. (Geological and Natural History Survey of Minnesota, vol. i. p. 624.) If the hull of the boat was ever burned it was not until sometime after the cabin, machinery and other fixtures had been removed. In that case it could have been set on fire with equal facility by white men as by the Indians.



its machinery to Burbank & Co., at sheriff's sale, and finally its heavier equipments were removed as presently to be stated. In after years no repetition of this experiment was practicable on account of mill dams on the upper Minnesota, and ultimately numerous bridges over the upper portions of both streams.

#### THE FIRST STEAMER ON RED RIVER.

The first steamboat to navigate Red river was called the Anson Northup and this boat was placed on the river in 1859. Some years before the civil war, a steamboat called the North Star was in use on the Mississippi above the Falls of St. Anthony. This boat was bought at Minneapolis in the fall of 1858 by Capt. Anson Northup, who took it up the river to Crow Wing where it was dismantled. Here lumber was sawed for a prospective boat to navigate Red river. Early the next spring an expedition left Crow Wing consisting of 34 ox teams and 44 men enroute for the Red River Valley with the boilers, engine and furnishings of the North Star and the sawed lumber. The expedition followed one of the cart trails to Detroit lake, the remainder of the journey being across a stretch of country without trails, bridges or inhabitants and rather difficult to pass through in March. A town-site named Lafayette had been laid out a year or two before this time opposite the mouth of the Sheyenne, and this place contained a log cabin or two. The party arrived here on the evening of the first of April. Here the hull of the boat was built. This being completed and the boilers and machinery having been placed in position, it was launched and next run up to Fort Abercrombie where the cabin was constructed.

This first boat to navigate Red river had a capacity of from 50 to 75 tons. Its machinery had previously been used in other boats and is said to have been brought to the west from the state of Maine about the year 1851. The steamer started for Fort Garry on May 17, and arrived there on June 5, 1859. She returned up to Fort Abercrombie bringing on the trip twenty passengers. Here she was tied up and when Capt. Blakely and others desired her further services they were informed that they would have to buy the Anson Northup if they wanted to run her. Capt. Northup had agreed to place a steamer on Red river for the bonus that had been offered, but had not agreed to run the boat on any regular trips. Later on the boat was bought by J. C. Burbank.

#### STAGE LINE TO RED RIVER.

The Hudson Bay company maintained a few posts this side of the boundary line in the capacity of a commercial organization. One of these, called Geergetown, located on the Minnesota side of Red river, 16 miles north of the site of Moorhead, was established August 12, 1859. The post was located by James McKey. During the same year an association called the Minnesota Stage

company was organized by J. C. Burbank, Russell Blakely and their associates, to put on a line of stage coaches between St. Cloud and Fort Abercrombie, the route being by way of Sauk Center, Osakis, Alexandria and Breckenridge. This stage line resulted from mail contracts of 1858, whereby mail was to be carried by way of the places named to Fort Abercrombie and other north-western points. An expedition was sent out in June to bridge streams and open the road. This being done and stations established, the stages began running in the fall of 1859. The next spring the stage line was extended down to the Georgetown post.

There accompanied the road-making expedition a party of ladies and gentlemen from Great Britain bound for the Hudson Bay posts in British America. Of the party were the Misses Ellenora and Christina Sterling, of Scotland. The party, it seems, expected to travel by boat to Fort Garry, but Captain Northup having refused to run the steamer, a flatboat was built at Fort Abercrombie and the party proceeded down the river, the flatboat being in charge of Geo. W. Northup. On the trip down one morning a small band of Chippeway Indians fired several shots at the party. George asked why and what reason they had for shooting at them. Their answer was: "You must not talk our enemies' language if you don't want to be shot at." It took twenty-two days to reach Fort Garry, and the ladies went on to Lake Athabasca where they arrived just as winter set in.

While on his return to St. Paul, Capt. Blakely learned of the purchase of the Anson Northup by his associate, Mr. Burbank. He appears to have returned at once to the valley. Under her new ownership the boat made another trip to Fort Garry. The water now being low the boat could not get through the Goose rapids. Her cargo was unloaded, the intention being to have it taken to its destination by McKey's carts, when the timely arrival of Capt. Blakely resulted in the construction of wing dams, and the goods being reloaded, the boat proceeded safely to Fort Garry, but the crew returned to St. Paul by a cart train.

In the spring of 1860, Capt. Blakely and associates completed a contract with Sir George Simpson for the transportation of 500 tons of freight annually from St. Paul to Fort Garry for a period of five years. The steamer was refitted the same spring, was renamed the Pioneer, and was commanded that summer by Capt. Sam Painter, with Alden Bryant, clerk.

Nick Huffman said in the sketch written by him: "Stations had been built along the [stage] road, and teams by the hundred were hauling freight for Fort Garry and Georgetown. The old steamer Ans Northup was then making regular trips from Georgetown to Fort Garry. There was life and good pay everywhere. John Campbell and Bill Kerr were batching at Campbell station. I got work and good pay haying. Captain Munn sent for me to

work on the steamboat, which they then called the Pioneer. There was no pleasure in this as the water was low and the men had to haul on the lines all day and chop wood all night by lantern, and we had a hard time to get the boat to Georgetown."

The mail was now extended from Fort Abercrombie to Pembina, and William Tarbell and Geo. W. Northup were employed as carriers, using carts in summer and dog-trains in winter. Ultimately the Pioneer passed into the hands of the Hudson Bay company, was dismantled, and her engines used to run a saw-mill.

#### THE INTERNATIONAL.

The next boat to be placed upon Red river was called the International. She was built at Georgetown in 1861.\* This boat contained the machinery and other belongings of the stranded Freighter which had been hauled by ox-teams across the prairies late the previous fall and in charge of C. P. V. Lull.† The timber for the hull was cut along Red river, and sawed by the old fashioned pit method, one man working the lower end of the saw below in a pit, and another the upper end upon the log above. The International measured 137 feet in length, 26 feet beam, and was rated at 133 tons. She was owned by Burbank & Company.

Nick Huffman, evidently referring to the year 1862, wrote: "In the spring we all went on the boat, with Capt. Barrett, Pilot John K. Swan, and the usual crowd of rousters. We run by day, and chopped wood by night, as the Indians did not allow any woodchoppers to stay on the river, and so the boat had to get its own wood. The Indians owned the whole country then. It was steamboating under difficulties as the Indians were inclined to be hostile and took everything from the settlers. The whole crew soon gave out and had to quit."

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\* According to the sketches the date of the International runs from 1859 to 1863 inclusive. A. W. Kelly, of Jamestown, N. D., came to St. Paul in 1861, arriving there on the day of the battle of Bull Run. He then went to Georgetown where he helped to build the International. This fixes the building of the boat in the latter half of the year 1861. The boat was probably not launched until the spring of 1862.

† "There was an old steamboat lying in the Minnesota river six miles below Big Stone lake which was intended to come over into Red river in 1857. There was a big flood in the Minnesota river and Captain Davis thought he could run the old Freighter, for that was the name of the boat, into the Red river, but the water went down and the boat was left stranded. The boat was sold at sheriff's sale, and was bought by Burbank of the stage company. There was a Welshman left in charge of the boat and here he stayed nearly four years away from wife and children with nothing to eat, only what he could hunt and fish.

"In the fall of 1860 we took a lot of teams, wagons and tools, under orders from Burbank and took the boat to pieces and brought it to Georgetown. We found the boat and the little Welshman all right.

"A second trip was necessary for the machinery. There were two big boilers, but we brought them safely to Georgetown where the boat was rebuilt. We did not reach Georgetown till after Christmas with the last load and the weather was very cold."—NICK HUFFMAN'S STORY.

Russell Blakely says: "The Indians had protested against the use of the river for steamboats complaining that the boats drove away the game and killed the fish, while the whistle made such an unearthly noise that it disturbed the spirits of their dead and their fathers could not rest in their graves. They demanded four kegs of yellow money to quiet the spirits of their fathers or that the boats be stopped. At this time Clark W. Thompson, superintendent of Indian affairs and Indian Commissioner Dole, were on their way to the mouth of Red Lake river, opposite Grand Forks, to hold a treaty with the Indians. They were turned back by the opening of Indian hostilities in August, 1862."

The Sioux Indian outbreak was confined more to central and western Minnesota than to the Red River Valley, though in the upper part of it they killed a few settlers, plundered teams loaded with supplies, burned what there then was of Breckenridge and besieged Fort Abercrombie for six weeks. Most of the settlers then located along the Minnesota side of the river in that part of the valley were warned in time and fled for shelter both to the fort and the fur trading post at Georgetown.

During these troubles the International was taken to Fort Garry. A cart train from St. Paul loaded with Hudson Bay goods had just arrived at Georgetown in charge of Norman W. Kittson; the teamsters and others were organized into a defensive force consisting of 44 men, but as they were indifferently armed and the post unable to stand a siege, it was decided after keeping guard for two weeks, to abandon it and seek safety at Fort Garry. Pierre Bottineau was sent to Pembina for a relief guard, and the people, carts and goods were ferried across the river at night. Elm river was crossed the first day and the Goose river on the second when the relief party was met. Among these men were Joe Rolette, Wm. Moorhead, Hugh Donaldson and other old time frontiersmen. The third night out, the party camped three miles south of the site of Grand Forks. At the forks of the river they found several hundred Chippeways who had gathered to meet the Indian commission. This band took whatever food they could lay their hands upon and allowed the party to proceed to Fort Garry without further molestation. The Georgetown post remained vacant until 1864 when it was again occupied.

The International was brought to Fort Abercrombie in 1863 by Capt. Barrett, and in 1864 was sold to the Hudson Bay company, it having become apparant that the country could not be opened up against the interest of that powerful organization. They did not want immigration and trade, nor mails or other appliances of civilization. The boat made but one trip that year. The cart brigades again put in an appearance and the country became devastated by grasshoppers.\*

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\* Sketch by Capt. Russell Blakely.



## HATCH'S BATTALION.

On account of the Sioux outbreak of 1862 and continuation of Indian troubles into the year following, it was thought to be advisable to occupy the valley with troops. The Secretary of War commissioned Major E. A. C. Hatch, of St. Paul, to recruit a battalion of four companies of cavalry. It was late in the fall before the expedition with its accompanying wagon trains got started. They marched by way of St. Cloud, Sauk Center and Alexandria, but they divided the line of march at Pomme de Terre. Major Hatch with one division, proceeded to Georgetown direct, but Lieut. Charles Mix, with the other division, went by way of Fort Abercrombie. Major Hatch arrived at Georgetown October 30, and Lieut. Mix came in several days later. The expedition reached Pembina November 13, 1863. The march down the valley was an arduous one on account of scarcity of forage for the teams and cold weather. Upward of 250 animals, horses, mules and oxen, were lost. That winter the troops built Fort Pembina. Gov. Alexander Ramsey, of Minnesota, made a "treaty" with the Indians in October, 1863, and this, with the patrolling of the river, ended the trouble with them in the valley. In the spring of 1864, Hatch's battalion left the valley and returned to St. Paul.

## CUNNINGHAM'S EXPEDITION.

Cunningham's was also a military expedition made in 1865. It consisted of a regiment of cavalry, and upward of two hundred civilians, employed in various capacities, such as teamsters, cooks, etc. The expedition left Fort Snelling with Major Cunningham in command, and crossing the state of Minnesota, they marched to Devils lake by way of the Sheyenne river. The object of entering Dakota with United States troops at that time appears to have been to make a reconnaissance or to scout through the country and impress the Indians with a show of military strength, for their depredations in other parts of the territory had not wholly ceased. From Devils lake the expedition proceeded eastward toward Red river. This was in August, and the line of march was probably through the southwestern part of this county, for the expedition headed for the Georgetown post on their way back to Fort Snelling. This expedition had some influence on the settlement of the eastern part of North Dakota, for it made the country better known to men of Cunningham's command, who, some years later, emigrated hither.

## DISAPPEARANCE OF THE BUFFALO.

About the year 1867 or '68, the last of the buffalo that roamed over the eastern part of North Dakota disappeared from the Red River Valley. The bison instinctively avoided all localities frequented by man, and on that account the herds did not ap-

proach very near to the old Red River trail during the later years of their visits to the valley, but rather ranged somewhat back from the river. That they were extensively hunted in this part of the state, the abundance of their bones that the settlers found scattered over the prairies bore convincing testimony. The last roving herd left in the west was wiped out in eastern Montana in 1883. A few were saved from total destruction by being protected in the National Park, also some in corrals by a few ranchers. While the last of the herds were being killed off, their hides by the car-load were shipped over the Northern Pacific railroad, to be followed a few years later by car-loads of their bones over the same and other lines, destined to eastern sugar refineries and bone mills. The immense bone piles at some of the railroad stations in North Dakota, as collected by the settlers and sold to shippers during the later 'eighties, presented surprising objects.

#### MANITOBA OPENED UP.

In March, 1869, the Earl of Granville succeeded in terminating the Hudson Bay contracts and that company surrendered possession of the country, thus ending a twenty-one year contest on the part of the Imperial government for the opening of the country. The organization of the Manitoba government was provided for in 1870, and on August 23 of that year, Colonel Wolsey at the head of the 60th Canadian Rifles entered Fort Garry, and on September 2, Lieutenant Governor Archibald arrived and the colony was duly organized. James W. Taylor, the American consul, arrived in November.

At the time of the surrender of their privileges to the crown, the Hudson Bay company occupied twenty districts and possessed 120 posts in Manitoba and the Northwest territory, and employed 3,000 men. Fort Garry was their principal stronghold. The first Fort Garry was established in 1821, at the time of the coalition of the Northwest and Hudson Bay companies. A second fort, that so often mentioned in Red River Valley history, was built in the vicinity of the first in 1835, the old one being dismantled. Both of these forts stood upon the site of the city of Winnipeg which was founded in 1870. The political power of the Hudson Bay company now being gone, they dwindled to a mere commercial organization, and in that capacity they continued to maintain a few posts this side of the boundary line so long as it was of any profit to them to do so. The British Northwest now being open to settlement, a large immigration soon followed from Ontario and other eastern provinces of Canada.

#### THE APPROACH OF THE RAILROADS.

The railroads have wielded a vast influence on the later development of the Red River Valley. As we shall have to take up again this subject, as these neared and were next built through



this county, it will be proper at this point to give some account of the time and manner of their approach to the valley itself. Two great railroad lines, more than any others, finally exercised a potent influence on the settlement and development of the valley. These were the Great Northern and Northern Pacific railroads. While the latter road has always borne its present name, it should be stated of the former named system that its lines were at first called the St. Paul & Pacific Railroad. This name was retained until 1879; in that year there was a reorganization of the company and the road then took the name of the St. Paul, Minneapolis & Manitoba Railway. In 1890 the Great Northern system took its present name. The original road was chartered in 1856.

On June 25, 1862, in the midst of the civil war, a short ten mile stretch of track was put in operation between St. Paul and the village of St. Anthony, now comprised in the east side of Minneapolis. This short line was the first railroad to be built in Minnesota and it was the beginning of the present Great Northern system. An isolated railroad system, comprising a few short lines of track and owned by different companies, next began to radiate outward in various directions from St. Paul and Minneapolis. These lines were confined to eastern Minnesota and were isolated in the sense that, while interconnected, none of them for about a half dozen years had any connection with any of the lines then radiating from Milwaukee or Chicago. To equip them, the rails, cars, locomotives, etc., all had to be brought up the Mississippi river from the nearest points below St. Paul at which they could be delivered to the boats by railroad.

By the year 1866 the northern line of the St. Paul & Pacific had been extended up to Sauk Rapids, near St. Cloud, 76 miles above St. Paul. In 1872 this line was built through St. Cloud to Melrose, 34 miles west of the former place, and here the track halted for several years. In the meantime, the southern route of this system was begun at Minneapolis in 1867, was pushed year by year toward the Red River Valley and reached Breckenridge, according to some old settler's recollections, October 21, 1871.

The conception of a railroad from the head of Lake Superior to Puget Sound originated during the early years of railroad construction in this country. After the beginning of the first trans-continental line, the original conception took definite form and shape and a company was organized to build it. The road was chartered by Congress July 2, 1864. Preliminary work on the Northern Pacific was begun near Thompson, Minn., February 15, 1870, and by the close of that year 50 miles of track had been laid west of the point of its divergence from the St. Paul & Duluth railroad. The next year 179 miles more of track were added to that first laid, thus completing the road as far west as the Red river at Moorhead by December 1, 1871.

## ALONG RED RIVER IN 1870-'71.

There had been a few frontiersmen located along the Minnesota side of Red river above Georgetown since about 1858, but the Dakota side of the upper part of the valley practically remained unoccupied until about the year 1870. John Lindstrom, now a resident of Lind township in this county, came from Douglas county, Minn., and settled on the Dakota side of the river May 18, 1870. He writes to author as follows:

"When I came to Dakota in 1870, I settled on the Red river in what is now Cass county, fifteen miles north of where Fargo now stands. At that time there were very few white people anywhere on the Dakota side of Red river. At Fort Abercrombie there was the garrison, but below that place there were no settlers for fifty miles. At the point right opposite the Hudson Bay post of Georgetown there lived a Frenchman called Jack—I never heard any other name applied to him—who traded with the halfbreeds and Indians that came along the river. I used to trade with him too, sometimes. He charged fifteen dollars a barrel for flour, thirty cents a pound for pork, two dollars a gallon for kerosene, two dollars a gallon for black strap molasses, four dollars a gallon for vinegar, three pounds of sugar for a dollar, and  $2\frac{1}{2}$  pounds of coffee for a dollar. He sold gunpowder, shot and gun-caps, always charging three times as much as at the general stores.

"Jack also sold whiskey, but the sale of that article came to a sudden stop when the soldiers who were to garrison Fort Pembina went by his place. They camped for the night south of his place, but they found out that he sold whiskey. So two of them walked down there so as to 'get the lay of the thing' as they generally expressed it. They took a few candles along which they traded off for whiskey so as to find out where it was kept. The next morning, as they were about to pass by, the whole gang turned into his place, crowded into the house, coralled Jack at the table where he was eating his breakfast, and some of them commenced to help themselves to what was on the table so as to draw his attention while the others helped themselves to the whiskey. The keg was nearly full, and as this held ten gallons, they could not afford to leave what their canteens would not hold, so they shouldered the keg and walked off. Their officers took them about three miles down the river; there they had a rest which lasted until the next morning and they had a glorious time, singing and shouting. This wound up Jack's saloon business, for he was afraid of having more customers of that kind.

"One day a contractor that hauled goods to Pembina came along the river with about twenty-five yoke of oxen and as many wagons. His teamsters were all white men, or would have been such if washed. Each man drove two or three teams, according to his ability, but his cook was considered one of the smartest of

them, though he only drove two teams. But in addition to his driving the teams he was furnished with an old smooth-bore musket and ammunition so as to do a little hunting along the road. When they had gotten between Georgetown and Elm river, a bear came along on the outer side of the road so as to cross it behind the line of teams. Some one, as a joke, shouted to the cook to take his gun, run out, and kill the bear. The man took his gun, loaded with duck-shot, and the rest of his ammunition, and ran out to meet the bear. All thought that they would lose their cook, but none of them had sense enough to warn the fellow back. But fools generally have good luck and so had this one. When he had gotten within five rods of Bruin, the latter party thought he had better get ready for a fight. Rising on his hind legs he waited for an attack. The cook fired his charge of shot square into the bear's forehead, but the gun being dirty, the shot scattered and blew out the bear's eyes. That was the only thing that saved the man's life. Now there was time to reload and a man was hastily sent out by the train boss to shout to the cook that he should go close up to the animal, take aim behind the shoulder, and fire forward. He did so, and put an end to the roaring and distracted animal.

"But the greatest novelty we had to look at in those days was when the Hudson Bay company's freighters passed by us, going between Fort Garry and St. Cloud. Sometimes they had trains consisting of one hundred and six Red River carts drawn by ponies or oxen, both kinds of animals being used in the same train. The drivers rode alongside on horseback. They were generally halfbreeds, as could be seen by their long hair hanging down on their shoulders and mocassins on their feet; otherwise they were clothed like white men. From eight to ten carts were managed by each driver. The equipment of each man was a short whip, generally hung by a string around the wrist of the right hand, a muzzle-loading shot gun, a powder-horn and a shot-bag. The boss was always a white man, and he generally had one or more white men with him as a kind of bodyguard.

"The last buffalo seen in this region was in 1867 when one was seen and shot on the Dakota side six miles below Georgetown. In 1871 there were some wild Texas steers roaming across the country, one being shot at Rush river, one at the mouth of the Shesenne and another near the mouth of Elm river."

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## PART III.

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# THE FIRST SETTLEMENT.

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### CIVIL ORGANIZATION.

#### INTRODUCTORY REMARKS.



WE HAVE now arrived at the period when settlers began to occupy the west side of Red river with the intention of establishing permanent settlements. With the spreading of the incoming population over the North Dakota side of the valley, this work is not specially concerned, excepting in so far as this immigration was confined to the limits of Grand Forks county with its present boundaries. That subject will presently be given considerable attention, since county histories, at least in the western states, are mainly concerned with settlements, phases of life and the progress in different decades of their material development.

As viewed from the historic standpoint, Grand Forks county, relative to its progress for the last thirty years, may be said to present the following points as characteristic of this comparatively brief period: Here was made the second settlement, so far as the occupation of a townsite is concerned, of white families in the state; the first was made at Pembina by a part of the Selkirk colony about 1813. During the first seven or eight years of the period referred to, the settlement of the county progressed in a slow and fitful manner, not much advancement being made within that time to any particular distance west of Red river excepting up the course of Goose river. In the meantime, conditions were such that the agricultural development of the county was being held in abeyance. During most of this interval the history of the county is chiefly bound up in that of the settlement at Grand Forks. When, finally, its interior portion began to be occupied by the incoming settlers, it was along the timbered streams and not upon the open prairie that these earlier locations were made.



Then, from one to two years later, a movement west from Grand Forks began by which the prairie lands were rapidly taken, this westward advancement of population being through the central part of the county, but with considerable deflection in some localities north and south of the course of the main movement. In 1880, the year that the railroad development of the county began, immigration into it commenced in earnest, the floodtide reaching high-water mark in 1882, so that by the year following the county had been quite generally overrun and the most of its vacant lands filed upon. Toward the end its settlement progressed with accelerated rapidity.

Within about ten years after the initial settlement had been made, the railroad development of the county was begun and was completed to its present mileage in a little more than seven years. Within this second interval the existent towns and villages of the county, built upon these lines, had their beginning and have been gradually building up since that time. The city of Grand Forks, especially, has made phenomenal progress since becoming a railroad center. Since 1882, yet more particularly within the last dozen years, the farms, generally, have been undergoing improvement, increasing in respect to what is really substantial valuation, and the aggregate wealth of the county has also increased until it is now rated as one of the wealthy ones of the state. Though considerable was brought in, the most of this wealth has been created here.

Since the county was overrun by settlers, or what is more to the point, since the last decennial census, its gain in population has resulted more from what is called natural increase, and from the building up of the towns and peopling of the same by later comers than from any farther occupation of land or division of farms into smaller holdings. Since 1883, speculation has subsided, society chrystalized, education advanced and existing conditions along all lines have had time to become long and firmly established.

Before speaking of the creation and organization of the county, it will be in order at this point to take a glance at the conditions existent here about the time that the first settlement was made within its present boundaries. We have only to go back about thirty years. In the case of counties originally well forested, and which contained swamps and small marshes capable of being drained, the changes that have been wrought in their physical aspect within thirty or forty years after settlement have often been of a very marked character, but with counties like Grand Forks, the changes, though considerable, are more of a superficial nature, the result of town and other building, railroad construction, cultivation of land, planting of artificial groves and hedge-rows on the farms and shade trees in the towns.

## ASPECTS AND CONDITIONS IN 1870.

There being no great amount of timber land in the county in comparison with its area, the greater portion of it lay in 1870 as wild prairie land exists in its primitive state. The natural prairie grass was short, only attaining a height suitable for use as hay in moist or wet places where there had been some gathering of the waters when the snow melted. Of wet, sedgy places, occupying shallow depressions of the prairie, there were then a far greater number of them than there are now. Interspersed with the prairie grass there grew quite a variety of botanical plants, many of them of the flowering kind. The buffalo had but recently disappeared and had not been gone long enough for their wallows to have become grassed over or their trails obliterated, but the elk, antelope, coyote, fox, etc., still remained as denizens of the country. The gopher was not abundant, for the coyote and fox thinned their number. Thus these prairie lands lay vacant, awaiting the coming of the settler and the touch of the plow.

There were then no claimants to the limited tracts of timber that border the interior streams of the county. The timber was more or less clogged in places, with the floatwood and flottage of these watercourses, the fallen and dead timber, vines and underbrush, and occasionally there were to be found a few fire-scarred and blackened trunks of trees still standing where they had grown. There were then to be seen in places along the streams the worn trails of the buffalo, where they had wended their way down the slopes to drink or to cross from the prairie on one side to that on the other. Where the banks were steep the herds made use of the coulees that occasionally occur in such places, in their movements in and out of the stream valleys. Followed upward, the trails were soon lost on the prairies, and upon any of the slopes they were deepened somewhat by winds and rains at the time that the buffaloes used them, and not wholly so by the treading of the animals themselves.

In the spring and fall, wild fowl of all kinds that were birds of passage to this region, paused for awhile in and around the ponds and marshy places of the valley plain and higher back country, in large numbers, and with little probability of being disturbed by man, though it should be said that Indians and halfbreeds occasionally visited the county during their hunting expeditions, but at that time there were but few even of these. In the same year also, there were a couple of cabins of white men at the forks of the river, the only habitations in the present county, and a well worn cart route passed the same point, the timbered banks of the stream each summer being made resonant with the noise of trains of the creaking Red River carts of famous memory, mingled with the oaths and shouts of the drivers.



There was plying on the river in those days a single steamboat—the International—owned by and operated in the interest of the Hudson Bay company. During the spring, when there was a good stage of water, the boat sometimes went up stream as far as Fort Abercrombie in running between Fort Garry and any of the up river points, and later in the season only as far as Georgetown. In the fall, when the water ran low in the Goose rapids, she only ran up as far as Frog Point. The boat was then making as many as three trips each season and the cart brigades but one.

#### THE OLD CART TRAILS.

There were three cart routes or "halfbreed trails," as the early settlers called them, that crossed through different parts of the present county. The river route has already been referred to. It was one of the cart routes from Pembina and Fort Garry to St. Paul and later to St. Cloud after that place became a railroad point. It followed the general trend of the river, of course, cutting off the bends. It was already old when Griggs and Vaughn first saw it in the fall of 1870, and it probably dated from the early 'forties if it was first struck out by the independent traders of Rolette's time. At all events, it was no recently marked way when Major Woods and Capt. Pope followed its course in 1849, and the mail appears to have been carried over it ten years later than that date. In 1870 it was a well worn trail. "Hundreds of carts in summer and dog-sleds in winter traveled over it," writes Vaughn, and at the close of the preceding part of this work another old timer has mentioned what impressed himself concerning it during the same year.

Next in age was the old Georgetown trail that passed through the western part of the county. This had been abandoned for several years when first observed by the settlers who had located in that section, and it was then already grass-grown. It followed the lower slope of the uplands through this county, at least to a considerable extent, if not wholly so, and on account of avoiding such wet or sedgy places as existed toward the western side of the Elk Valley, then occurring more frequently than now. This trail led from Fort Garry to Fort Abercrombie, thence to St. Paul by one of the Minnesota routes that have been mentioned. A branch trail, or cross-cut, from Georgetown ran northwest through parts of Cass and Traill counties intersecting the inland trail, and together these formed a continuous route between the Georgetown and St. Joseph posts, thence to Fort Garry. Hence it came to be called by the early settlers of Traill county who found it still plainly marked upon the surface the "old Georgetown trail."

Chas. H. Lee, of Walhalla, the compiler of the "Long Ago" sketches, writes to the author: "This trail, I think, was opened

up about 1859. Mr. J. F. Mager, now a resident here, came in over that trail that year with his father, and he states that it was not a trail at that time in the proper sense of the word, as it was hardly discernable and, at points, would have been lost entirely but for the knowledge of their Indian guide."

The reason why this route was opened so far west of Red river was probably due to the fact that in spring and early summer the route near the river, in some places, became well nigh impassable. On that account a more dry route upon higher land was desirable. In 1870, men with teams, materials and supplies were sent from Fort Abercrombie to re-establish Fort Pembina. Some were sent down the river by flatboat, but one party, which included about twenty-five carpenters, were obliged to proceed by the back country route. At first they traveled by way of the trail along the river, but this being found impassable for the many loaded teams accompanying the party, a detour was made and the more western route was struck at Maple river.

The third one of these cart routes that crossed the area of country now comprised in Grand Forks county appears to have been a cross-cut between the river and inland trails and which formed a route from the Hudson Bay post of Goose River (now Caledonia) to St. Joseph and Fort Garry. This trail led in a northwestern direction and passing the "lone tree," it crossed Turtle river at the Newell C. Morgan place, thence bearing west-by-north it recrossed the stream near the line between Elm Grove and Hegton township, and intersected the other trail some distance north of Elm grove. The "lone tree" is a large cottonwood in Section 21, Blooming township, and is now surrounded by smaller ones of the same kind. In the old days it stood as a landmark to travelers coming down the trail and going to Turtle river and the section around Gilby.

Now the halfbreed trails were unlike those worn upon the prairies by the settlers in using the common farm wagon. They consisted of three separate and closely parallel paths, each about sixteen inches in width, the outer ones being worn by the thick rimmed, heavy wheels of the carts, and the center one by the treading of the animals drawing them, both ponies and oxen being used and harnessed single between the phills of each cart. Thus peculiar roadways were worn upon the prairie surface by the passage of the cart trains that annually traversed these routes and the worn trails remained visible for many years after they had ceased to be used.

#### THE CREATION OF COUNTIES.

The territory of Dakota, which, as originally formed, extended from the state of Minnesota, as at present bounded, westward to the Rocky mountain divide, was created by act of Congress

shortly before the opening of the civil war, the bill having been signed by President Buchanan on March 2, 1861, which was two days prior to his being succeeded by President Lincoln. The bill had passed the Senate February 26, and the House March 1. The newly inaugurated president appointed William Jaynes, of Illinois, governor of the territory. He arrived at Yankton on May 27, 1861.

The first territorial legislature, consisting of thirteen members of the house and nine of the council, convened at Yankton March 17, 1862, and held its session until May 15, following. This body created four counties in what is now North Dakota, and which bordered on Red river. These were named from north to south as follows: Kittson, Chippeway,\* Stevens and Sheyenne. Not a single county in either North or South Dakota now bears any one of these four names. There were no white inhabitants in any of these counties when they were created, excepting a few at Pembina and St. Joseph, (now Walthalla) and the officers, soldiers and employees at Fort Abercrombie. They were never organized, and although they found a place on maps and in some of the school geographies of the next few years, nothing appears to have been done toward permanently maintaining them either under their prescribed boundaries or names.

In 1867, a large county was erected out of the present eastern portion of North Dakota. It was named Pembina county, and the territorial governor appointed Charles Cavileer, Joseph Rollette and Charles Grant county commissioners, who met and organized the county, August 12, 1867. The following county officers were appointed: John E. Harrison, register of deeds; Wm. H. Moorhead, sheriff; James McFetridge, judge of probate; and John Dease, superintendent of public instruction. Pembina was made the county seat.

The tenth session of the territorial legislature convened at Yankton December 2, 1872, and continued its session until January 10, 1873. Among other acts this assembly passed a bill creating a number of counties in that portion of the territory now included in the eastern part of North Dakota. These were Pembina, (of less area than that of 1867) Grand Forks, Cass, Richland, Cavalier, Foster, Ransom, LaMoure, Renville, and Stutsman, with boundaries more or less different from their present ones. This act was signed by the governor January 4, 1873.

Probably Judson LaMoure who was elected the previous fall to the house and Enos Stutsman to the council, both from Pembina, were more instrumental in fathering the creation of these

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\* Chippeway county took in all of Traill and Steele excepting their southern tier of townships, and all but the southern and western tier of townships in Griggs, likewise all of Nelson excepting its western range of townships, and Grand Forks county in its entirety.

counties than any other members of that assembly, and the latter named gentleman arranged for the naming of them while stopping at the house of Morgan T. Rich, the first settler of Richland county, on his way to Yankton.\*

#### ORGANIZATION OF GRAND FORKS COUNTY.

In the act creating these counties commissioners were appointed to organize them. Geo. B. Winship, John W. Stewart and Ole Thompson were named as the board of county commissioners to organize Grand Forks county. No attempt to accomplish this end was made until July, 1873, when Messrs. Winship and Stewart met at the tavern or stage station kept by the latter gentleman at Grand Forks. As Mr. Thompson had refused to qualify as a commissioner, the other two designated O. S. Freeman as a third commissioner in place of that gentleman. After four days' session the work of completing this first organization of the county was accomplished and with the following result: Register of deeds and county clerk, J. J. Mulligan; judge of probate, Thomas Walsh; county attorney and superintendent of schools, O. S. Freeman. The other officers cannot now be so positively named, no record of their proceedings having been preserved, but probably Alex. Griggs was appointed treasurer and Nicholas Huffman sheriff. Alex. Griggs, M. L. McCormack and O. S. Freeman were appointed a commission to locate the county-seat, and they, of course, selected Grand Forks.†

Thus the county was fully organized according to law in 1873. But owing to the apathy of the county officers and what, perhaps, was a more potent cause, the sparse settlement of the county at that time, the organization was suffered to lapse, which made necessary its re-organization the following year. Mr. Winship has stated that he does not believe that there were then 75 white men in the whole county.

In the fall of 1874, the county was re-organized by the territorial governor, John A. Burbank, who appointed a new board of county commissioners, to wit, David P. Reeves, Alexander Griggs and George A. Wheeler. Messrs. Wheeler and Reeves met at the residence of the latter commissioner (Griggs being absent) and completed the organization of the county March 2, 1875. The first officers of the county were: James Elton, register of deeds; Nicholas Huffman, sheriff; Thomas Walsh, treasurer and judge of probate; Geo. A. Wheeler, superintendent of schools; Thos. Walsh and D. P. Reeves, justices of the peace. Thomas Campbell and James Mulligan were appointed constables and O. S. Freeman, district attorney, but failed to qualify. The appointment of a coroner was deferred.

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\* The Record Magazine, September, 1896.

† From data furnished by Geo. B. Winship.



Thus by the spring of 1875 Grand Forks county finally entered upon the period of its civil history as a distinct and organized division of Dakota territory. As first created, the county covered a very large area of the Red River Valley, with a considerable extension into the higher country that lies to the west of the proper limits of the valley. It comprised all of the present county, together with parts of Traill, Steele, Nelson and Walsh counties. As to the time when the confluence of Red and Red Lake rivers was first called Grand Forks, we find no mention; but while the locality was likely designated as "the forks" by the voyageurs of the fur companies, we suspect that the prefixed word did not long ante-date the settlement of the place, if at all. But it was applied to the settlement made there and afterward was also adopted as the name of the county.

Traill county, formed from parts of Grand Forks and Cass, was organized February 23, 1875. The commissioners met at Goose River (now Caledonia) and proceeded to organize the county. Steele county was of later origin; it was formed from parts of Traill and Griggs and was organized June 14, 1883. In the year 1880, Grand Forks county was still one of the largest, if not the largest county in the territory of Dakota. It still included the southern half of Walsh county, and its western border extended to the vicinity of Lakota. In 1881 two tiers of townships were separated from its northern border and added to Walsh county which was created that year by being formed from parts of Grand Forks and Pembina counties. The county was organized August 30th of the same year. In 1883, townships in three ranges were also taken from its western part and given to the newly created county of Nelson, which was organized May 15th of that year. This reduced the area of Grand Forks county to its present dimensions.

#### LEGISLATIVE AND JUDICIAL DISTRICTS.

During the earlier years of Dakota territory, when the population to be represented was sparse, the legislative and judicial districts were apportioned on a large scale. As the population increased and the counties were reduced in area by the creation of others, the districts became more circumscribed, but like the counties, they increased in number. In the case of the legislative districts, this resulted in a gradual increase of the members of the territorial council and house of representatives, but the district judges hardly increased in like proportion. At every session of the legislature changes were made either with the legislative or judicial districts, or both, effecting their boundaries, designated numbers, etc., as new ones were created. We are only interested in those in which this county was concerned and can only indicate the general trend of matters.



At first the eastern part of the territory constituted one legislative district, the Fourth, called the Big Sioux and Red River district. The members of the first legislature were elected Sept. 16, 1861, and Hugh Donaldson was a member of the house from Pembina that session. In the second session, which convened Dec. 1, 1862 and held to Jan. 9, 1863, James McFetridge was a member of the council and James Y. Buckman and Hugh Donaldson were members of the house. At this session the Red River district was created. For one or two sessions thereafter this district was not represented in the legislature.

Enos Stutsman came to the territory from Des Moines, Iowa, as private secretary to Gov. Jaynes. After representing the Yankton district for several sessions during which period he was three times chosen president of the council, he took up his residence at Pembina and was sent to the house in the legislature of 1867-8 and was chosen speaker of the house. It was this legislature that created the big county of Pembina.

In 1877 the counties of Grand Forks and Pembina constituted the Eighth council district which was entitled to one member of the council. In 1879, the counties of Traill, Grand Forks and Pembina formed the Tenth district and was entitled to one member of the council and two members of the house. In 1881, Grand Forks, Traill and Walsh were made to constitute the Twelfth district, the member of the council to be elected from Grand Forks county. In 1885, Grand Forks county was designated as the Nineteenth legislative district.

Under statehood Grand Forks county is divided into three districts, the Fifth, Sixth and Seventh, and each is entitled to one senator and two representatives. For the townships and city wards that comprise each of these districts the reader is referred to the state constitution or to the Revised Codes of 1895.

The territorial judges were appointed by the President of the United States, but the legislature created the judicial districts and made the frequent changes of subdivisions, boundaries, etc., that became necessary. The judges were also associate justices of the supreme court of the territory. It was then divided only into three districts. The counties comprising these districts were often grouped together in subdivisions and the terms of court held at some one designated place for each subdivision of a district. In other cases single counties constituted a subdivision, if sufficiently populous.

A North Dakota judicial district was created by the territorial legislature of 1870-1 and Pembina was designated as the place where the court was to sit. The first session was held there in June, 1871, Judge George W. French presiding. George I. Foster was clerk; L. H. Lichfield United States Marshal; Judson LaMoure Deputy, and Warren Cowles United States Attorney.

This was the first court held in North Dakota. Judge Peter C. Shannon succeeded French and held two terms of court at Pembina in 1872. Judge A. H. Barnes was appointed associate justice by President Grant in 1873 and held office until succeeded by Judge Hudson.

In 1877, the counties of Cass, Stutsman, Richland, Ransom, LaMoure, Traill, Grand Forks, Pembina, Barnes, Foster, Ramsey, Cavalier, Gingras (now Wells), French (now Benson and Peirce), and Rolette constituted a large subdivision of the Third judicial district, the whole district then comprising nearly all of the area of North Dakota. The court for this subdivision was to be held at Fargo twice each year. In 1879 the district was made to comprise six subdivisions with as many designated county-seats at which terms of the district court were to be held. The county of Grand Forks singly was made one of these subdivisions. It was while Judge Barnes was in office that the first term of district court was held at Grand Forks.

In 1881 Judge S. A. Hudson became the incumbent of the Third judicial district, and held the office four years. He was succeeded by Judge Wm. B. McConnell, appointed by President Cleveland, May 8, 1885. The Third district was still quite extensive. In 1888 there were six districts; the northeastern counties, including Grand Forks, were now formed into a new district called the Fourth, Charles F. Templeton being appointed judge.

Under state government the the counties of Pembina, Cavalier, Walsh, Nelson and Grand Forks were designated as the First judicial district. In 1895 the three northern counties of the five just named were formed into a separate district, called the Seventh, Grand Forks and Nelson counties remaining as the First judicial district. Judge Templeton was elected to fill the office of district judge when the present state government was organized, was re-elected in 1892, and he was succeeded by Judge Charles J. Fisk, who entered upon the duties of his office January 4, 1897.

#### U. S. LAND OFFICE.

The first United States Land Office in Dakota territory was opened at Vermillion in 1862. The first one established in North Dakota was opened at Pembina, December 19, 1870, with Geo. F. Potter, Register and B. F. Brooks, Receiver. Its location being at the northeast corner of the territory and not conveniently situated, it was removed to Fargo and opened there Aug. 1, 1874. Six years later a new land district was created in the northeastern part of what is now North Dakota, and the U. S. Land Office at Grand Forks was accordingly opened April 20, 1880, B. C. Tiffany being its first Register and W. J. Anderson, Receiver.

Sections 16 and 36 of each surveyor's township are reserved as school lands. In this county these lands amount to 51,520 acres.

In 1893, the legislature made provision for the sale or rental of the school lands of the state for benefit of the school fund.

#### POPULATION.

When the United States census for 1860 was taken, there were no white inhabitants in the area now comprised in Grand Forks county. In 1871 there were about fifty at the settlement made that year at Grand Forks. The population in 1875 was something over 2,000. The census of 1880 gave Grand Forks county a population of 6,248 inhabitants, but probably about one thousand of these were located in the southern half of Walsh county, then a part of this county. There was a territorial census taken in 1885; this gave the county with present boundaries, 20,454 inhabitants. The census of 1890 showed that the population was then 18,321. This indicates a considerable decrease since 1885, probably chiefly due to re-emigration. The present population is reckoned at 25,000, which is apt to be an over-estimate.

### THE BEGINNINGS OF GRAND FORKS.

#### THE TOWNSITE.

The Red river at Grand Forks averages about two hundred feet in width, flowing between sloping banks, and, at its ordinary stage, is about forty feet below the common prairie level. There is but little show of bottom land along the river at this point. The Red Lake river, debouching into the larger stream here, so enters it that the timber belt along its south bank and that along the east bank of the Red, merges together so as to terminate in a triangular shaped point.

The city is built upon the valley plain that stretches outward from the west bank of the river, the site being mainly below the confluence of the two streams. The original townsite was mostly platted in the S. E $\frac{1}{4}$  of Section 3, which is partly fractional, but the city now covers eight or nine different quarter-sections and portions of others. The most of them are in the north part of Grand Forks township, but the many additions to the original townsite that have successively been platted, has caused the city to overlap into the south part of Falconer township. The site of the city is essentially level and was a good location upon which to found a town. In building it upon this site there was no heavy forest to clear away, no hills to be leveled down, and practically no hollows to be filled.

#### GEOGRAPHICAL LOCATION.

It was not Captain Griggs' choice of a location, but far more potent factors that determined the site of Grand Forks. These were geographical location and physical conditions combined

with favorable surroundings. These basic factors being what they are, agricultural development of the surrounding country, converging railroads, invested capital and business energy in conjunction with the laws of commerce, have made the city what it is in present times.

The distance by railroad from Fargo to Winnipeg is 229 miles, the latter city being located about 55 miles beyond the international boundary. With the rise of these places as distributing points, each in its respective part of the valley, a large trade and manufacturing center on Red river was bound to arise somewhere between them, because of a commercial necessity, and because the stretch of country between the others is so wide. A physical fact—the forks of Red river—determined where this intermediate trade center should arise. The geographical location of Grand Forks chanced to be an excellent one, being nearly at the midway point between Fargo and the boundary line; near the center of the broad portion of the valley that lies within United States territory and in the line of the route taken by the Great Northern Railway from the head of Lake Superior to Montana and the Pacific coast. Necessarily the city has grown up on the west side of the river. The movement of the products of the country being chiefly from west to east the places on the side of lakes and streams that is in the direction from whence the bulk of the produce comes are the ones that are apt to attain the largest growth. Given a townsite equally good on the other side, and even granting its prior settlement, the result for the west bank would not have been much different from what it is now. Nor does it make any essential difference as to who chose the townsite or founded the place; results today would have been essentially the same if other persons had been concerned and even three or four years of either earlier or later beginning would now have made but little difference. The primary acts of a few individuals do not alter very much ultimate results which are themselves the outgrowth of conditions based upon natural and commercial laws.

#### FORERUNNERS OF PIONEER SETTLERS.

Nicholas Huffman first came to the Red River Valley in the spring of 1860. He was probably a native of Germany, but had likely resided in one of the middle western states before coming to the valley. While living, he furnished the Red River Valley Old Settlers' association with a record of his life and experiences from the time he came here down to the termination of the siege of Fort Abercrombie at which he was present in August and September, 1862.\* Unfortunately he never finished his narrative so as to cover the period of the first occupation of the Dakota

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\* "Nick Huffman's Story," published in The Record Magazine, Oct. 1896.



side of the river at Grand Forks. He finally died by his own hand, in East Grand Forks, on or about August 19, 1896.

In the fall of 1868, Huffman and August Loon built a log shack in the timber on the river bank a half mile above the point where Red Lake river enters Red river. They were the first white men to reside in the present county. They were joined in August, 1869, by Sanford C. Cady, who also put up a cabin during the following year and on the land now covered by Viets' addition to Grand Forks. These parties were engaged in carrying the mail by sub-contract with Blakely & Carpenter from Breckenridge to Pembina and were found there with one Antoine Gerard or Geroux, a Canadian Frenchman, in the fall of 1870.

These men had their residence and followed their vocation here, but they came not as do bands of pioneers going from an old to a new section of the country with the intention of establishing a new settlement or founding a town; they were here in the interest of the mail service, not knowing whether their stay was likely to be long or merely transient. They however, considered themselves as squatters, Huffman and Cady virtually being such by reason of building their respective abodes, but they had no conception of the future value of the land that lay around them unoccupied.\* Coming earlier than prospectively permanent settlers, these four persons seem like men of another epoch, and in fact, did belong to another era of the valley in which a different phase of life was existent than that which followed.

#### GRAND FORKS' FIRST POSTMASTER.

It is in connection with these heralds of permanent settlement that we have now to speak of the first postmaster of Grand Forks whose name was entered on the books of the Post Office department, who was duly appointed, qualified and commissioned before any settlement had been made on the original townsites and before Capt. Griggs ever saw the Red River Valley.

Sanford C. Cady is a native of Ohio. Like many other of the old time frontiersmen, he came to Dakota in the employment of the government, and was engaged between 1866 and 1869 as Chief Wagon-master in hauling supplies from Fort Abercrombie to the frontier posts. He quit the government service in the spring of 1869 and engaged to haul goods to Fort Garry, taking through three ox-teams, the wagons being loaded with a stock of boots and shoes, and he received \$350 for hauling this freight.

Enos Stutsman, of Pembina, was interested in whatever concerned the welfare of the Red River Valley. He was an astute politician, and probably more, for having seen in his lifetime the rise of several states on either side of the Mississippi, he must have realized, with prophetic foresight, the then future

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\* Statements of Sanford C. Cady. He is still a resident of this county.



importance of the great valley plain of the Red river. It was through his efforts, in sending a petition to the Postmaster General at Washington that the mail station at the forks of Red river was designated as a post-office in 1870, and a postmaster appointed for the place.

Mr. Cady was the first postmaster of Grand Forks. Some correspondence passed between Cady and Stutsman relative to the matter, and, among other things, the question of naming the office was broached. Mr. Cady suggested Grand Forks, a name, he states, already used by the Canadian French employees of the Hudson Bay company and others. Stutsman wrote him a jocose letter about the application of the word "grand" to the tame scenery around the forks of the river, varied only by a couple of log shacks, nevertheless the name was adopted, was likewise given by Stutsman himself to the county some two and a half years later, and was first officially used by the Postoffice Department at Washington.

Mr. Cady's commission, which is still in his possession, bears the signature of John A. J. Creswell, Postmaster General under President Grant, and shows that the appointment was made June 15, that Mr. Cady qualified July 18, while the commission is dated August 2, 1870. In procuring the appointment of a postmaster for the mail station at the forks of Red river at that early day when there were no other inhabitants there than those mentioned, at a time too when the mail was only being carried up and down the river road once a week at most, and sometimes in a haphazard fashion, Stutsman evidently presumed that a settlement would be made there, and at no distant day.

#### JAMES J. HILL AND ALEXANDER GRIGGS.

James J. Hill, now president of the Great Northern Railway system, was, in those early years, a warehouseman of St. Paul. History will accord to the master mind of this man that meed of credit which is his due for his conception of making the fertile lands of the Red River Valley directly tributary to the twin cities by connecting lines of railroad, and for the rapid development of the Northwest which he was instrumental in hastening forward to its present stage of growth. With the Canadian Pacific north and the Northern Pacific south, both in process of construction during the 'seventies, it is evident that the settlement and development of the intervening portion of the Red River Valley would soon inevitably have begun to occur. Some railroad company would, therefore, have seized the opportunity if President Hill had not; but it is, perhaps, safe to say that no other man of present times would or could have accomplished with such characteristic energy and persistency of purpose what he has done, at the time it was done, and so quickly and so well.

Much of the goods then being transported to Manitoba passed through the house of the firm of Hill & Griggs, and thus his attention was attracted to the future possibilities of the Red River Valley. In 1869 he made a trip from St. Paul to Fort Garry, passing down the valley by dog-sledge. He appears to have decided at this time to build a steamboat for the river traffic so as to facilitate the transportation business of the firm. Later, we find him purchasing ground at Pembina for a warehouse.

Captain Alexander Griggs is a native of Ohio, and was born at Marietta, the first town that was founded in his native state. He is next found in early life living at St. Paul. For sometime prior to July, 1870, he was captain of a steamboat called the "St. Anthony Falls" that ran on the Mississippi and Minnesota rivers. Howard R. Vaughn, now residing at Walhalla, was clerk on this boat. Captain Griggs' home was at Henderson, Minn., a town on the Minnesota river about sixty miles above St. Paul. As a river captain, we take it for granted that he was familiar with the character of the different townsites on both the Mississippi and Minnesota rivers, observing how the towns that are located at or near the mouths of the valleys of the intersecting streams were the ones that were apt to have attained the largest growth. At all events, his experience and observations seem to have had something more than a remote connection with his choice of the Grand Forks townsite.

Griggs and Vaughn spent July 4, 1870 at Henderson; on the 5th they went to St. Paul and turned the St. Anthony Falls steamer over to headquarters; on the 6th they returned to Henderson to bid goodbye to friends and on the following morning they started for the Otter Tail Lake country.

#### THE HILL TRANSPORTATION COMPANY. \*

About July 1, 1870, Capt. Griggs took the contract to build for the Hill Transportation company a steamer to run on Red river. This was the boat afterwards known as the Selkirk. On July 7th Howard R. Vaughn and the captain left Henderson for the Red River Valley, not, however, going there directly. They went by rail as far as St. Cloud, taking a couple of boat carpenters along who had been picked up on the way. Their next move was by stage across country by the old time route to a point as near to Otter Tail lake as they could make by this mode of conveyance, which was within some miles of Old Crossing, a point on Otter Tail river, sixteen miles east of Breckenridge. Alighting from the stage, the party next proceeded up to the Otter Tail Lake

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\* The paragraphs under this heading are largely based upon "The Long Ago," a pamphlet of 76 pages, issued by the Walhalla Mountaineer, in 1898. Compiled by Chas. H. Lee. Pp. 65, 66 and 67. Also upon data kindly furnished the author of this work by Howard R. Vaughn of Walhalla.

region to procure oak and pine lumber for the prospective steamer, and some lumbermen were engaged in that part of the state. Pine trees were felled and the logs sawed at Frazee's mills; the oak lumber was otherwise procured. Lumber was also purchased to build seven flatboats, each about forty feet in length, and the sawed stock was loaded into them lengthwise, then they were worked down through Otter Tail lake, and with some difficulty incidental to the navigation of small streams, down past the site of Fergus Falls and around to McCauleyville, opposite Fort Abercrombie, where Griggs and Vaughn and the boat crews arrived about the first of September. For the first time Capt. Griggs now saw the Red River Valley. This journey and the lumbering operations connected with it were the first acts, productive of material results, that in any way led directly to the settlement of Grand Forks county.

During the fall of 1870 there was a great deal of freighting done, Hill, Griggs & Co., being the leaders in this line, and much of the goods were in bond bound for Winnipeg. In order to facilitate the trade, flatboats were built without waiting for the completion of the Selkirk, the merchandise loaded into them, crews picked and all floated down the river. About forty loads of goods were sent down the river that fall in that way. At Winnipeg the boats were knocked to pieces and sold for lumber. During the season Mr. Vaughn had charge of the construction of these boats and the steamer, under Griggs, while the captain himself spent nearly all of his time on the river selling lumber and delivering the goods at Winnipeg.

It was late before the river froze up that year and November came before the last fleet of boats, seven in number, started for Winnipeg. Mr. Vaughn accompanied the boats on this trip. At Frog Point (now Belmont) the river froze up and the boats were laid up for a week. Here Mr. Vaughn met Capt. Griggs on his way up the river from Winnipeg. The sun came out warm and the ice melted so that the boats were again gotten under way and taken to Grand Forks, then a mail station and post-office only. Here the goods were unloaded and the boats broken up, the lumber being used to construct a temporary storage building both to store the goods and protect them from the spring rains in case they were left there that long.

Capt. Griggs had accompanied Vaughn and his men back as far as the forks of the river, or rather had driven down in a buckboard. He was now acquainted with the river from Fort Abercrombie to Winnipeg and had had an opportunity to look for the best townsites along its banks. He also knew of the approaching lines of railroad and must have inferred that the permanent occupation of the country would not much longer be delayed. Being a man of sagacity and practical business habits,

he realized his opportunity, and the sites of Moorhead and Fargo being either claimed or of doubtful utility just at that interval, he accordingly made choice of the next best site to be found between those points and Winnipeg, liking the looks of this locality the best and himself and Vaughn decided to take claims here, or rather locate squatter's claims and settle upon them afterward. The township lines had been run by the government surveyors in that part of the valley that year, hence it was not a very difficult matter to locate corners of quarter-sections, at least approximately, by measuring and ranging from these lines. Capt. Griggs selected a claim, upon which, over three years afterward, he filed a homestead entry and later still had platted upon a part of it the original townsite of Grand Forks; that chosen by Vaughn was below this, he thinks the land now comprising Riverside or in that vicinity.

Griggs and Vaughn now set a part of their flatboatmen at work getting out logs for two small cabins to be erected, one upon each claim, but the work was abandoned without attempting to construct them that year, or at the most only a few logs were thrown together to indicate foundations to shacks and show some signs of a purpose to pre-empt the claims, for the cabins were not actually put up until the next spring. Whatever was done, appears to have been done hastily, for cold weather was at hand and Griggs and Vaughn and their men soon departed for the winter. In fact, little was really done that year beyond locating the claims.\*

Leaving a man to look after the stored goods, the captain and Vaughn next went up to McCauleyville in the buckboard, following the cart road. Vaughn refers to it as a tiresome journey. He remained at McCauleyville during a part of the winter, but Capt. Griggs returned at once to Henderson, leaving for home before the end of November. Vaughn having received an appointment about the first of January in the Customs department at Pembina, he resigned his position with Griggs and removed to that place early in February, 1871.

About a month after Mr. Vaughn's arrival at Pembina, word was received by the Customs department that some pilfering had been done among the bonded goods stored at the forks.

\* In answer to inquiries made by the author of this work, H. R. Vaughn, S. C. Cady and Thos. Walsh all substantially agree that no log cabin whatever, in the proper sense of the word, was put up on the original townsite of Grand Forks in the year 1870. According to *The Record Magazine*, July, 1895, Capt. Griggs' "improvement" merely consisted of the foundation to a cabin, twelve feet square and five logs high. A few logs thrown together in the form of a pen did not constitute a squatter's cabin. Nor was Capt. Griggs a squatter at the forks of the river that fall; in all probability he, himself, never claimed to have been such. The familiar narrative concerning his flatboat trip down the river, his landing at its forks, building a log cabin and taking possession of the land as a squatter (apparently all by himself) is legendary, and hardly warranted by the real facts of the matter.



Accompanied by Judson LaMoure, who was Deputy U. S. Marshal, Mr. Vaughn proceeded by pony and sled to the forks in March to look into matters and to arrest suspected parties, but the latter object was not accomplished. The snow that winter lay deep upon the ground and only the beaten track could be traveled without using snowshoes. Besides being rendered snowblind by the glare of the sun on the snowy plain, two or three days of discomfort were spent by them at the forks in the mail carrier's small cabin amidst stored supplies, men, dogs and fleas. These canines that bred the fleas were train dogs used in carrying the mail in winter and were fed on half frozen raw fish, taken from the river. Fish, too, of the kind called "gold eyes," is said to have constituted the principal living of the drivers. Sometime after the return of Vaughn and LaMoure the stored goods were sledded to a bonded warehouse at Pembina and afterwards taken to Winnipeg.

We have now to speak of an early settler at Grand Forks who came there in the mid-winter season of 1870-71. George W. Aker left Milwaukee, Wis., for the Red River Valley in August, was at Alexandria, Minn., September 26, 1870, and thereafter was engaged for some time in hauling supplies from McCauleyville to other points, making one trip to Fort Totten that fall. After this he made two trips down to the mail station at the forks of Red river, the first being made in November of that year, and the second a little later. When Mr. Vaughn removed to Pembina in February, 1871, Mr. Aker accompanied him as far as the forks, and on the journey down there Vaughn arranged with him to occupy and hold down the claim he had selected until he had leisure to settle upon it himself. This land is now contained in Riverside Park and Skidmore's addition to Grand Forks. Aker cut and hauled out logs for a cabin on this claim which he put up with the help of one, Jacob Whay, in April, 1871.\*

Mr. Vaughn having decided to remain at Pembina, and the country not developing as soon as had been expected, nor the townships being as yet, surveyed (i. e., subdivided), he finally tired of holding his squatter's right by proxy and transferred it to Aker in part payment for his services.† Mr. Aker states that the letter of Vaughn first making this intention known to him is dated January 24, 1872.

#### THE SETTLEMENT AT GRAND FORKS.

The history of the city of Grand Forks, relative to the actual settlement of the townsite, properly begins with its first occupation by persons who came to stay, to establish permanent homes, to found a town and to acquire in it whatever property interests might be open to honest endeavor. This event took place in the spring of 1871.

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\* From statements made by Geo. W. Aker.    † Statement of H. R. Vaughn.



Thomas Walsh was born in Ireland, from whence he came to the province of Quebec, Canada, presumably with his parents, for this was during his boyhood. In after years he joined in the emigration movement of the 'fifties, then flowing like a springtide toward Minnesota territory, and located at Henderson in 1856.

When Capt. Griggs returned to Henderson late in the fall of 1870, he arranged with Thomas Walsh to come to Dakota in the spring and settle upon the site he had chosen at the forks of Red river. This understanding was had in December and Mr. Walsh was to have a half interest in the townsite. Griggs interested others at Henderson in the proposed settlement on or about the same time. The captain with Walsh and Hurd, were to erect a steam saw-mill at the settlement and Walsh was also to assist in establishing a general store there. Accordingly, in the spring of 1871, Thomas Walsh, Burton Haney, James Jenks, and Alexander Blair left Henderson for the Red River Valley. They proceeded by railroad to Benson, Minn., to which place the line from Minneapolis to Breckenridge had recently been extended, thence journeyed afoot to Old Crossing, staging the remainder of the distance to McCauleyville, where the Selkirk was then approaching completion. The outfit for the saw-mill and their supplies was sent along as freight, and was brought to McCauleyville over the same route.

The Selkirk not being ready, the party came down the river by flatboat and were about six days in making the trip down to the forks. The saw-mill machinery and their supplies was taken along at the same time on the flatboat. They arrived at the site of the future city on or about April 15, 1871.

We further learn from Geo. W. Aker these facts relative to Capt. Griggs' preparation for a cabin and the condition in which the Walsh party found it. The captain had his flatboatmen cut and haul together the logs for one upon his prospective claim. A single round of logs only was laid down that fall for a foundation; then, during the early part of the following month of April, the man that Griggs left there to look after the stored goods, with the help of others, put up a few more logs upon the four first laid down. The shack had neither floor nor roof, and thus the Walsh party, arriving shortly afterwards, found it. Mr. Walsh also states that all else they found upon the original townsite was an Indian tepee and a halfbreed cart, and that the only persons then around the forks that he remembers were Nicholas Huffman, August Loon and a few woodchoppers. Such were the conditions found existing now over twenty-eight years ago where a populous and important city has since grown up. "We set to work" says Mr. Walsh "to clean the snow out of a small shanty, put in a floor and roof on the shanty, also putting in a door and a window. That was the first start of Grand Forks

city, about April 15-18, 1871." Thus Thos. Walsh and those who came with him became the first actual settlers upon the original townsite of Grand Forks.

The beginning of the place, was with a few log cabins and shacks. The saw-mill was gotten in operation by the first of August, but could only turn out lumber from such trees as grow along the river, the pine being absent.

Besides those who came directly with Thos. Walsh, there also came that spring or summer, Capt. Alex. Griggs, John W. Stewart, John Fadden, Sr., David Blair, M. E. Hurd, O. E. Nash, James Elton, D. M. Holmes, M. L. McCormack, Joseph Greenwood, O. S. Freeman, D. P. Reeves, Asa Sargeant, and some others. Of Thos. Walsh and those who came with him or afterward and who held to the country during those early years, it may be said of them as of Griggs, Vaughn, Cady, Aker and other early comers, they were of the class of men that founded this state.

#### THE SELKIRK.

The later stage of steamboat building for the navigation of Red river was inaugurated by the construction of the Selkirk. This later era, as has been remarked, was coeval with the occupation of the country by settlers, hence, until practically terminated in so far as the navigable portion of the whole river is concerned by the building of the present lines of railroad in the valley, it assumed far larger proportions and importance while it did last than the earlier period of the fur trading days that had produced only two boats.

The Selkirk was built at McCauleyville under the firm name of Hill, Griggs & Co., being owned by James J. Hill, Alex. Griggs and C. W. Griggs. Hill was interested in the placing of a steamer on Red river as a business venture in connection with the transportation interests of the firm, which he, personally, had exerted himself to develop. The conception of the project was likely his own.

As stated, Howard R. Vaughn, who seems to have been Griggs' right hand man for business enterprises, had general charge of matters, particularly after Griggs left for Henderson, but the actual construction of the boat was carried on under the supervision of David P. Reeves, a practical boat builder. David McCauley had built a saw-mill at McCauleyville in 1867, cutting considerable lumber for the government posts from logs floated down Otter Tail river. The greater portion of such pine lumber as was used in the construction of the Selkirk was obtained at this mill, notwithstanding the fact that a large amount of pine had been brought down the river by Capt. Griggs and his men as already narrated; but the mill at McCauleyville could not furnish all the material that was needed at that time. Mr. Vaughn

states that a large number of men worked on the Selkirk, off and on, including some of the flatboat crews when these men were not otherwise employed, and thinks that fifteen to twenty-five hands were engaged at odd times in its construction. Work on the boat began in the fall and progressed through the winter following, so that by springtime it was ready for launching. The beginning of the construction of the Selkirk was over a year before either the Northern Pacific or St. Paul & Pacific railroads had reached the valley, consequently her boilers, machinery and furnishings had to be teamed from the end of the last named line, then at Willmar, Minn., 112 miles southeast of Breckenridge.

In building steamboats along Red river, a favorable place was selected for the boat yard and the bank of the stream was graded down if necessary. The hull rested level, raised up a little upon blocking. When completed, timbers slanting down to the water were placed beneath the boat and secured in position. Then the blocking was gradually removed by the aid of jack-screws, so as to lower the boat upon the timbers, and the process of launching was merely the sliding of the steamer bodily into the river sidewise.

The Selkirk was launched on or about April 12, 1871, and very soon afterward was steaming down the river on her first trip. Capt. Griggs' inclinations naturally ran toward river navigation, so he was master of the Selkirk. The steamer reached the Grand Forks settlement about the 18th, and here several persons landed who thereafter became identified with its earlier affairs. Continuing her trip, the Selkirk put into the mouth of the Pembina river amidst a hard wind storm on the 20th, reporting at the custom house as having arrived at Pembina that day. About two days later the steamer reached Winnipeg. Quite different was this first trip of the Selkirk from steamboating on the Ohio or the upper Mississippi where every few miles landings have to be made at either small villages or thriving towns and cities; here, from Fort Abercrombie to Pembina, along a distance of over 350 miles as the river runs, the narrow forest belt following the sinuous windings of the stream was then mainly a solitude, broken only by a few embryo settlements, and, at long intervals, by the log buildings of the Hudson Bay company trading posts. To the passengers, the Selkirk must have seemed as a herald of civilization.

The International, as has been stated, was owned and operated by the Hudson Bay company, but the Selkirk was built for general traffic, which, it was foreseen, increasing immigration into the country would develop in considerable volume. This steamer became one of the most noted boats on the river, and it played an important part in the settlement and development of the country.

## THE FIRST SIX YEARS OF GRAND FORKS.

## AFFAIRS IN 1871.

The settlement at Grand Forks was made in what was then Pembina county of Dakota territory. Sometime after that county had been organized, its commissioners, in the absence of townships, subdivided it into several large voting precincts, some of which are not known to have contained any white inhabitants when they were established. These precincts were not all created at any one time. On July 3, 1871, the commissioners created the Grand Forks precinct, which comprised the territory within the following boundaries: Commencing at the mouth of Turtle river the line drawn ran up that stream fifteen miles. thence due south to Goose river, thence down that stream to its mouth, and thence down Red river to the place of beginning. On September 4th the Park river was made the north boundary of this precinct, the crest of the uplands its western boundary, while its southern boundary was made to commence at a point on Red river five miles north of the mouth of Goose river, thence running due west to the crest of the uplands. At the first election held in this precinct, Thos. Walsh, John Fadden and S. C. Cady were appointed judges of election.

Another act of the county commissioners of the same year was to grant to John Fadden a charter for a ferry across Red river at Grand Forks at \$21 per annum for five years. Fadden's house was located nearly opposite the point of land formed by the confluence of the Red and Red Lake rivers, and here the ferry was established so that those who crossed the main stream could be landed or taken on just below the mouth of Red Lake river. The road on the Minnesota side that led from the landing up through the timber is still to be seen there, for it is occasionally used by persons who drive down to the river for sand. This locality is now spanned by two bridges, one over either stream.

The location of the first buildings at Grand Forks had an intimate association with the rather broad slope of the river bank. The slope of the land from what was the edge of the valley plain along the present river front of the city, thence down to the margin of the stream, mainly consists of moderately descending ground, though there is some tendency toward a variable surface in respect to the minor features of the slope. The river bank, within the limits specified, has a breadth varying from about 10 to 20 or 25 rods, and with but little of what may properly be called bottom land. The amount of descent is between 40 and 45 feet, the small angle of pitch being a little more or less, according to the breadth of the slope. Now the timber along the river is



mainly confined to its sloping banks and limited areas of bottom land, generally terminating at the prairie margin on the top of the slope. During the early years of which we are speaking, the broad hill slope here was more or less thickly wooded, as is still the case to a considerable extent along the river bank both above and below the city.

Capt. Griggs and family came in the spring and during the year he built a substantial frame house near the log cabin that had been put up that spring on his claim. The house stood upon the site now covered by the rear portion of the Syndicate block, is still in existence upon another site, and is the low winged dwelling near the foot of Kittson avenue, close by the gas-works. While in its original location, the house was the home of Capt. Griggs for many years.

In the summer of 1871 a telegraph line was constructed between the point selected by the Northern Pacific engineers for the railroad crossing of Red river (Moorhead) and Fort Pembina, the line following the stage road. It was put up by the Northwestern Telegraph company, of Kenosha, Wis., and was owned and operated by them. Sanford C. Cady contracted to furnish and set the poles, which were cut along the river. Geo. B. Winship and Wm. Budge took a sub-contract for twenty miles of this line between Turtle river and Kelly's Point, now called Acton. After the line was completed to Pembina, Cady was assigned the position of line repairer. This was the first telegraph line that was constructed in North Dakota.\* It was extended that fall

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\* Mr. Cady's contract with the telegraph company reads as given below. The original is written on one side of a single small sheet of foolscap paper and as this was the first telegraph line to be constructed in North Dakota, is a document of some historical value.

PEMBINA, July 17, 1871.

Article of agreement between Cady of the Grand Forks, Dakota territory, of the first part, and the Northwestern Telegraph Co., Kenosha, Wisconsin, of the second part, for the constructing [of] a line between Fort Pembina, Dakota territory, and a certain point on the Red river where the Northern Pacific Railroad may be located, about fifteen miles south of Georgetown, Minnesota. The party of the first part agrees to furnish [the poles] set them and nail on the brackets for the sum of one dollar per pole. Said poles to be four inches in diameter at the top end, straight and of sound timber, twenty-two feet long, and of oak, ash or elm, and to be trimmed smooth. Poles to be set three feet and six inches in the ground and set solid and firm. The same to be constructed along and on the west side of the stage track leading from Pembina to said Railroad crossing and the brackets to be nailed on the west side of the poles. Number of poles set per mile not less than twenty-two, nor more than twenty-five, at the option of the party of the second part. The party of the second part to furnish the brackets & nails and deliver them in quantities along the line of the river as the party of the first part(y) may designate. The party of the second part to pay the party of the first part the sum above named when the whole line is completed. Said line to be completed by the 30[th] day of September, 1871.

Witness: M. L. McCORMACK

S. C. CADY,  
O. W. ROBERTSON,  
Agt for N. W. T Co



to Winnipeg, a person named McKusey having the contract to furnish and set the poles between Pembina and Winnipeg. The first operator at Grand Forks was a Mr. Cran who came that fall.

In the fall, Thomas Walsh and Alex. Griggs established a general store at the settlement as had originally been planned. This building stood on the east side of Third street, a little to the south of where the track of the Great Northern railroad approaches the street crossing from the bridge, while the saw-mill was in its vicinity, having stood near the top of the river bank about four rods north of the railroad.

There were now two boats running on the river, to wit, the old International, built ten years previously, and the new steamer Selkirk. At this time Frog Point, a little below the foot of the Goose rapids, was made the head of navigation for the boats on account of the difficulty experienced in trying to navigate the boulder strewn channel above during any low stage of water. To Frog Point merchandise was freighted by ox-teams and Red River carts from the nearest railroad points in Minnesota. Bales of furs were shipped from Frog Point as brought up by the boats from places below, and men connected with the fur trade, river men and teamsters congregated there at times in great array.

An emigration movement had now set in toward Manitoba. Hundreds of emigrants were passing through this country enroute for that province, and most of the passengers on the boats were of this class. But officers from Canada and England with their families and attendants, and agents connected with the Hudson Bay company, also traveled by the same mode of conveyance. The character of the times, which was the beginning of the transition period between the old epoch of the valley and its coming new one, its mercantile transactions and methods of transportation and conveyance, naturally produced its corresponding phase of life, destined to be transient only and never again to be seen repeated here.

Besides the boats there was no regular means of accommodating travel up and down the valley. But it was just at this time that the stage line of Blakely & Carpenter was extended from Breckenridge to Winnipeg, both to carry the mails and accommodate the increasing travel to Manitoba. Capt. Blakely contracted with the Dominion government to carry the mail on the stages from Pembina to Winnipeg. The first stage arrived at Winnipeg September 11, 1871. This extension of the stage route down the valley took place some little time before either of the railroads had reached Red river. The stages ran daily, summer and winter. The trip from Breckenridge to Winnipeg could be made in three days, including night travel. Stage stations were established at convenient points along the route in the valley for the care of horses and passengers, as had been done

a dozen years before in Minnesota when the route was opened through that state. One of these stations was at Goose River, one at Frog Point, one at Grand Forks and another at the crossing of Turtle river where Manvel is located. The stage road followed what had formerly been the old Red River trail and later mail route. This came into Grand Forks diagonally through what is now Viets' addition, coming in upon Third street at Kittson avenue and leaving the settlement toward Manvel along the down river continuation of Third street or closely approximating to this public way.

About the distance of a furlong southeast from the residence of Judge Corliss, and at the foot of the river slope, is a piece of partially cleared bottom land that is specially historic ground in so far as Grand Forks city and county are concerned, for here, near by a large broken topped, but spreading elm tree, stood the cabin of the first white men who located in this part of the valley, that of Huffman and Loon, while John W. Stewart's shack, built sometime in 1871, was located a few rods to the north of it. Stewart had a garden here and the cleared space shows some signs of former cultivation.

S. C. Cady remained postmaster of Grand Forks through most of the year 1871, and appointed Stewart deputy. The post-office was located that year in Stewart's log shanty, and was a primitive affair. The amount of mail arriving each week could not have been large. Stewart built and kept the stage station at Grand Forks. Late in the fall he succeeded Cady as postmaster of the settlement and moved the office into the stage station. This was located on the edge of the prairie about six hundred feet southward from the Corliss mansion, and as the building is still in a fair state of preservation, it is used as a dwelling house and has, of course, been altered over some from what it was originally. The old horse barn of the station, built of hewn logs and native lumber, stood and in part still stands a few rods north of what was once the station itself, being located at about the top of the sloping bank, or partially upon both forms of the ground there so as to provide the building with an under part. The reason why the stage station was built nearly a mile south of the settlement was likely owing to the fact that Stewart chanced to locate there several months before the stages began running. This building was known as Stewart's hotel and was the humble, but not immediate, predecessor of Grand Forks' fine hotels of present times.

The first marriage ceremony that occurred in the community was of that sort that takes place before witnesses, wherein Nick Huffman was married to a halfbreed woman in the spring of 1871, W. C. Nash officiating. Mr. Nash also read the first burial service here. The first wedding in this county wherein both bride and groom were purely white people was that of S. C. Cady

and Sarah J. Fadden, who were married at Grand Forks September 29, 1871, by John E. Harrison, a justice of the peace. Miss Fadden was a daughter of John Fadden, Sr., who came with his family from McLeod county, Minn. The marriage of M. L. McCormack to Miss Jennie Strong, a sister of Mrs. Alex. Griggs, was the next ceremony of the kind to occur in the community. There were then no newspapers in all of what is now the state of North Dakota to make mention of social happenings of this kind.

George B. Winship and William Budge are men both of whom have become prominently identified with the later history of the Red River Valley and the state. We first find them together at Pembina and in the same year that Grand Forks got its first start they are also found located upon the soil of this county.

Mr. Winship was born at Saco, Maine, in 1847. In 1851 his parents emigrated to the west and located at LaCrosse, Wis., the place then being little more than a settlement. Six years later they moved across the river to La Crescent, Minn., which place was started about that time. It was here that Winship learned something about the printer's trade in the office of the local paper, a fact that determined his future career as a publisher. In 1863 he entered the army as a member of the 2d Minnesota Cavalry and served until the end of the war. In 1867 he came into the country as a member of Davy's overland expedition to Idaho which became stranded at Fort Abercrombie. He then put in a year at teaming and in the spring of 1868 went to Fort Garry where he worked on Dr. Schultz's paper, the Norwester—afterward published by Riel as "The New Nation"—and printed \$50,000 of Hudson Bay company money used to pay Riel's soldiers. Winship came to Pembina about the first of May, 1870. Here, about a month later, he first met Wm. Budge. Both were then young men. Winship was stopping at Peter Hayden's, and the two camped there about a month, or until the work of building Fort Pembina began, Nathan Myrick and W. C. Nash having the contract for construction. About the first of July, Winship was offered a position in A. W. Stiles' sutler store at the fort and accordingly entered his employment as clerk.

Wm. Budge is a native of the island of South Ronaldsha, the southernmost of the Orkneys, Scotland, and came across the ocean to this country in the year 1869. He came in by way of Hudson bay and states that the method of travel at that time between York Factory and Fort Garry was by the Hudson Bay company's Mackinaw boats and Indian canoes. He remained in Manitoba for awhile, traveled west as far as the Rockies, which in those days was no railroad journey, and soon afterward he came to Pembina.

About the first week of May, 1871, Budge and Winship left Pembina and located claims at Turtle river, building a log cabin

at the place where the old Red River trail crossed the stream. In that section the trail was deflected considerably to the west of Red river owing to sloughs and the great body of timber about the mouth of Turtle river. After putting up the cabin they went back to build one for a person named James Hastings where the village of Drayton is now situated. During a part of that summer, Budge carried the mail between Grand Forks and Pembina for Nick Huffman, who held the sub-contract, using a pony and Red River cart. In the fall when the stages began running, the cabin at the crossing very readily became one of the stations on the route. Budge and Winship had bridged the stream before this, but when the stage route was opened the company put in a substantial bridge at the crossing. The cart trains had merely used fords where the trails crossed the streams in accordance with the rude methods of transportation then prevalent. In 1873 Winship sold his interest in the stage station to Budge and Eshelman and in the fall of that year he went to St. Paul to work at his trade as a printer. At a later day Budge, too, left Turtle river, going with a party to the Black Hills in 1876, and after his return to Dakota he took up his residence at Grand Forks.\*

The population of Grand Forks in 1871 is said to have been about fifty persons, which was nearly all the inhabitants there were then in the present county. There were a few halfbreeds and Canadian French woodchoppers about the place that year providing fuel for the boats.

#### GRAND FORKS IN 1872 AND 1873.

Grand Forks has ever shown a tendency to extend up and down the river rather than outward from the vicinity of its banks. Whatever extension has been made toward the west, at least beyond Fifth street, has resulted more from the pressure of expansion outward from the original townsite than from any natural tendency to build up the city in that direction. The fact seems not to be fortuitous, but rather to be in accordance with some definite law governing the growth of aggregations of people under given conditions. Now while Grand Forks was merely a settlement, and in the years now under consideration, the principle governing this factor of future extension already existed in an embryo stage, for the buildings then put up were either located along the edge of the prairie or partly upon the slope of the river bank, with about a mile stretch between the saw-mill and the stage station, thus conforming to the course of the travel and traffic of the time, both on the river and the old trail.

Rev. O. H. Elmer was a Presbyterian clergyman who came to Moorhead soon after that place was started. He first came to Grand Forks during the winter following the affairs just related.

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\* Mainly from data furnished by William Budge.



Having driven down, he held the first public religious service in the settlement in the house of Capt. Alex. Griggs, on Sunday, February 11, 1872. A matter of this kind in respect to places that grow to importance from small beginnings is always worthy of record as being prophetic of the founding of future churches.

In 1872 the stages were making the trip from Moorhead to Winnipeg in about three days. That year a fast stage was run for awhile, or during the boating season, making the trip between the points named in twenty-four hours, the object being to divert passenger travel from the river to the stage line. In a good stage of water the boats usually made the trip from Grand Forks to Winnipeg in thirty-eight hours.

This same year Alex. Griggs broke six acres of the virgin prairie on his claim at Grand Forks. A few settlers had located along the river in Grand Forks, Walle and Bentrū townships in 1871, hence a little breaking had been done in the county before this, particularly at Eight Mile Point south of Grand Forks. But the amount then done in each case was small.

There are now but few buildings at Grand Forks that belong to the period that is marked off by the first half of the 'seventies; one such is a log house on Cottonwood street; then, on the east side of Third street about one hundred feet north of Division avenue, is a small wooden hotel that was built in the summer of 1872 by E. B. Andrus. It bore no name on its front in those days, but was jocosely called the "Hotel de Grab" owing to an alleged scarcity of victuals upon its tables and the consequent necessity of grabbing in order to get a fair meal.

As early as the summer of 1872 an effort was made to establish a school in the settlement. As has often happened in western settlements, two rival factions arose, disputing over the location of the proposed schoolhouse. This was carried so far that two small schools were gotten under way for the time being. One of these was conducted in a small framed shack situated near the stage station and was taught by Miss Blanding; the other school was kept in a small shanty located near where the Great Northern passenger depot now stands and was taught by Geo. Ames. As usually occurs in such cases, a feeling was engendered in the community that lasted until the principal actors in the matter had left the country; then, with the establishment of public schools the controversy seems to have been so far forgotten that no mention of these early schools occurs in the sketches.

The Selkirk was usually laid up each winter at Grand Forks. This initiated a boat yard here. It was established by Kittson, who was then connected with the transportation business of the Hudson Bay company. About this time the few boats on the river passed under his control and so he came to be called Commodore Kittson. D. P. Reeves was placed in charge of the boat



yard. This was located upon the river bank a short distance above the point. During the winter of 1873-4, there was built here, or rather lengthened, the steamer Dakota, which had previously been built at Breckenridge as a ninety foot boat.

During these early years there was considerable flatboating being done on the river despite the presence of steamboats. The business seems to have reached its culmination in 1872. Pine lumber could now readily be obtained at Moorhead that had been shipped in by railroad, and scores of flatboats left that place for down river points, many people journeying in this manner with their goods and chattels. There must have been either high freight charges on the steamers or lack of adequate transportation facilities, causing vexatious delays, to account for this flatboating business which seems to have sprung up as a temporary expedient to save costs and time. Before the railroads reached different points in the valley pine lumber was apt to have been scarce material in any section of it, and it is related that the famous Joe Rolette, who died at Pembina, May 16, 1871, was buried in a coffin made from lumber of a flatboat that opportunely arrived there just at that time. The boats were always taken to pieces for the sale or use of the lumber.

The old policy of the Hudson Bay company was to confine their business to the fur trade, but time, with its changing conditions, often causes associations as well as individuals to adapt their course so as to conform to altered or changing circumstances; hence, Donald O. Smith having succeeded Hudson Bay governor McTavish, this policy was changed so far as to trade with all of the people. The old post at Georgetown, Minn., had a succession of "factors" as the agents were called, the last one in charge there being Walter J. S. Traill, for whom Traill county was named. The post consisted of a few buildings constructed of hewn logs, and, at times, there was stored here peltries of enormous value. In 1873 the buildings were sold and the business moved to Grand Forks where the company acquired property interests. Mr. Traill also came to Grand Forks to take charge of the company's affairs here. They bought out the store and saw-mill already located here and proceeded to establish a general store of their own, also a hotel called the Northwestern. Their store was located on the corner of Third street and Kittson avenue where the Union National bank building and Platky's store now stand, while the hotel stood on the corner of Third street and DeMers avenue, or on the site now occupied by F. W. Schlager's Drug store.

Frank Viets is a native of Ohio, born in 1839, and served in the civil war. Himself, wife and little daughter came to Georgetown in August, 1870, and opened a hotel in one of the old post buildings. He was obliged to team his furniture and supplies from

St. Cloud and Alexandria. In those times Mr. and Mrs. Viets entertained many distinguished persons who chanced to visit the upper part of the valley. When the business transactions of the post was transferred to Grand Forks, Mr. and Mrs. Viets also came and took charge of the Northwestern hotel. Thus Mr. Viets early became identified with the history of the city of his choice.

In 1873 O. S. Freeman was appointed postmaster of Grand Forks, succeeding John W. Stewart, and he moved the office to the Hudson Bay company's store. The Northwestern hotel being completed and opened, the business of the stage station was likewise transferred to the settlement and to that building during the same year.

Fronting the settlement there was a limited opening of the timber, no great amount of it then having been cleared from the present city front and through this open space passengers enroute from Ontario to Manitoba, or any others, saw from the upper deck of the Selkirk a small and rather incongruous settlement. The population was still small, numbering that year about 160 persons. At this time the place consisted of the Hudson Bay company's store and hotel, also another hotel built the previous year, Capt. Griggs' house, the saw-mill, and a small number of cabins and shacks. Then there was the ferry, boat yard and stage station buildings above the settlement. The place also had a telegraph office. It was merely a frontier settlement, none consisting exclusively of white people existing to the west of it short of the Missouri river. The times were not yet ripe for town building in this part of the Red River Valley.

#### FIRST LAND ENTRIES, PUBLIC SCHOOL AND NEWSPAPER.

Thus far onward the settlement was on the public lands, consequently there were no transfers of land from party to party excepting in the way of squatter's rights, which do not become matters of record. Persons holding claims around Grand Forks prior to 1874 were squatters, unless such had scripted the land. The land in the county around Grand Forks was surveyed in 1873 and was opened to settlement in January, 1874. The United States Land Office was then located at Pembina. The first entries of land around Grand Forks were made in the early part of 1874 by Alex. Griggs, O. S. Freeman, John Fadden, Sr., J. S. Eshelman and likely by others.

When the county was organized its commissioners remembered the cause of education. The northern half of the county was accordingly designated as school district No. 1, and the southern half as school district No. 2. This provision was made at their meeting of March 2, 1875. But before this time definite action to erect a public school building at Grand Forks had been taken. Sometime in the year 1874 Mrs. Richmond taught a small school

in a shack 12 by 18 feet. The several small schools thus far attempted seem to have finally led to public action on the subject looking toward the establishment of a school that would have permanency. In the fall, after navigation had closed, some of the river men, among them Capt. H. E. Maloney and others, called a meeting for the purpose of raising money to erect a public schoolhouse. Capt. Maloney was one of the committee appointed for that purpose, and before the meeting closed \$500 was secured by subscriptions besides pledges for work. The building was erected during the winter of 1874-5 and cost \$472. In the spring, or perhaps before that season began, a school was opened in the new building with twelve or fifteen children in attendance. A young man named William Curle, a Methodist preacher who had been sent to Grand Forks by the Northwest Iowa conference, was placed in charge of the school. Its limited number of pupils is an index of the scant population of the place in 1875; yet it should be said that with settlements of this kind at that period numbers of men were often residents, who, for the time being, had left their families elsewhere.

It was not until about the time we have now reached that the settlement made any pretension of being so much as is generally implied in the word village. On April 26, 1875, Alex. Griggs and Etta, his wife, placed on file in the office of the Register of Deeds, a plat of the village of Grand Forks, comprising ninety or more acres of their claim. The original townsite of Grand Forks was platted by Hector Bruce, a civil engineer, the work having been done some time prior to the date of filing the drafted plat and appended documents. As laid out by the surveyor, the streets were made to parallel the river, which, opposite the business portion of the present city courses toward the northwest, and the avenues were laid out to cross these at right angles. In platting some of the various additions to the original townsite, the trend of the streets and avenues were made to conform more generally to the cardinal points of the compass.

There were but four newspapers in all of North Dakota in 1876, consequently there could have been but few in the whole territory at any time in the previous year and in those years of slow development daily papers in the territory were not to be thought of. It was in 1875 that Geo. H. Walsh founded the Grand Forks Plaindealer. For some time prior to this date he was doing editorial work on a paper in West St. Paul. He came to North Dakota in the year just named as clerk for the Red River Transportation company. He saw that there was an opportunity to start a newspaper at Grand Forks. He then had his printing materials shipped from St. Paul to Moorhead over the Northern Pacific, excepting a Washington hand-press which he purchased in Fargo. Thence the outfit for the office was brought down to

Grand Forks by steamer.\* "The first issue of the Plaindealer was on or about July 2, 1875. I cannot remember the exact date." So states the founder of the paper himself. For nearly four years this paper had the field all to itself in this part of the valley. On July 8, 1875, the Plaindealer was chosen as the official paper for Traill county instead of a Fargo paper previously used to publish the commissioners' proceedings, for it is presumable either that they had offers of publishing their proceedings made to them or that its first number had just attracted their attention. Mr. Walsh continued to publish the Plaindealer for about two years, after which others in succession took charge of the paper, among whom was D. McDonald.

In 1875 Frank Viets bought of the Hudson Bay company their hotel and general merchandise store, and this ended their trading business in the valley on this side of the boundary line. They still retained some real estate property at Grand Forks, but what remained of it three or four years later, was purchased by E. V. Holcomb and John McKelvey. Another event for the village in 1875 was the appointment of Alex. Griggs as postmaster, succeeding O. S. Freeman.

Business on the river was now developing in considerable proportions, and Grand Forks became something of a headquarters for river men, but their number here, even in the best days of steamboating on Red river, was never very large. The steamer Sheyenne was built at the boat yard here about 1874-5, and was designed to tow barges. This was the first side wheeled boat to be placed on the river, the others being of the stern wheeled type. The Sheyenne was built under the supervision of Capt. E. V. Holcomb and the river men spoke of her as "Holcomb's pet." Two more steamers, the Minnesota and Manitoba, were built at Moorhead in 1875 at the instance of the merchants of Winnipeg. This was called the Merchants' line. In the same year Commodore Kittson and associates organized the Red River Transportation company, which absorbed most every boat on the river. Before this the firm was Kittson & Hill. That year W. J. Anderson first came to Grand Forks as an agent of the newly organized company. The steamer Alpha was also built by this company at McCauleyville. In September, 1877, a boat called

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\* From statements made by Geo. H. Walsh.—If the first number was issued on the first Thursday in July of that year, the date was July 1, 1875. In 1881 the office of the Plaindealer was burned down with the loss of all of the old files and the later ones down to the date of the fire. Hence the discrepancies of the sketches as to the date of the first issue of the Plaindealer. The loss of the old files of this paper is probably an irreparable one from the standpoint of the county's history. It may be remarked here that the old files of a weekly paper published in any settlement in its early days, finally become of considerable value, provided the place ultimately grows to one of importance, for they reflect the life of any past era in a manner that cannot be expected of courthouse records.

the Pluck was transported from Brainerd to Moorhead on flat cars which was done by cutting the boat in two lengthwise. The next year the Pluck became one of the boats of the Alsip line.

In what is called the old stage coach days of any section of the country where Concord coaches provided the most speedy means of transit prior to the arrival of the railroads, the stage drivers have always constituted a widely known and long remembered class, and indeed, many peculiar characters were developed among them. We presume that many reminiscences might be collected concerning those who drove on the old Red river stage road, particularly in respect to the run they used to make between Grand Forks and Pembina, but we can only mention their names, as familiarly known to the public in the days of their usefulness, including those of a few others connected with the Northwestern Stage & Transportation company.

William Gidley was general agent for the company; Benjamin Lord, James VanRensselaer and a person named Sheperd were express messengers; then of the stage drivers there were: Joe Coloskey, John Hayten, Jacob Gosham (known as Lame Jake), James Thornton (Scar Faced Jim), Rube Harding, Dick Cole, Old Man Cole, Jack Connolly, Pat Kelly, Joe Morrison, Charlie Locke, Cal Young, Jake Rheinhardt, Frank Windle, Tom Baker, Newt Porter, Jud Winchester and a driver named Harman.

#### CONDITIONS AND SURROUNDINGS IN 1876.

In 1876 Grand Forks was about a half dozen years old and was still a small place, probably containing at this time between two and three hundred inhabitants. A few frame houses had now been built, but the majority of the dwellings were shanties of hewn logs with slant roofs and board shacks of the same form. Pine lumber, however, was beginning to be teamed in from Crookston, then the nearest railroad point. Those were years of patient waiting for immigration and development, which did not immediately come.

Outward from the village the view must have seemed monotonous, for no visible bluffs hem in this part of the valley toward the west, and on level plains like the alluvial expanse of prairie that spreads outward from either bank of Red river, the ground view is restricted to three or four miles by reason of the curvature of the earth's surface. To the southwest, however, the higher central land belt of the county is just barely visible, lying low on the horizon. There were then no objects upon the valley plain other than a few low claim shacks to form even artificial landmarks, the more prominent ones of this nature, such as are formed by elevators, church spires or farm houses with their groves of cultivated trees, being absent. The winding timber belts along the two streams alone formed natural landmarks.



In this northern clime the long summer days bring the wild vegetation rapidly to maturity, the summer green changing to a russet hue ere the fullness of autumn comes; then, in those times, after the frosts had come the annual prairie fires swept on their courses, burning over a section of the county here and another there, filling the air with dense clouds of smoke and leaving in their track a waste of inky blackness until this somber hue was removed by winds and rains. A prairie fire, driven before the wind, spreads out fan-shaped from the place of beginning, flaming fiercely at the front and burning slowly along the sides. While single fires might travel forward many miles, or until stopped by some watercourse, they were not apt to spread laterally to any great distance. A slight shower would soon extinguish one. The county as a whole, was annually burned over by many such fires, at different intervals, some sections either not being swept over at all some seasons or burned the next spring.

For the most part, the county at large, still lay in its primeval condition, as described for 1870; its western part about the Elk Valley and beyond was still frequented by elk and antelope and the bleaching bones of the buffalo lay scattered abundantly over the prairie lands. A few settlers, however, were already located on the headstream of the Goose, but the timbered streams north of this and back to any distance from the valley plain, were still without settlers. By this time the townships of the valley plain had been subdivided, and the lines of all others in the county as now bounded, had probably been run by the close of that year. For six or eight miles around Grand Forks the land had been entered, but probably only a few of those who had made filings on claims were occupying and improving them at this time.

#### THE BLACK HILLS PARTY AND OTHER MATTERS.

In the summer of 1874, Gen. Custer left Fort Abraham Lincoln with an expedition to explore the Black Hills. The men of his command speedily ascertained that there was gold in that region, a fact that soon became widely known. Although the government prohibited gold seekers from entering the Hills, this region then being a part of the Sioux Indian Reservation, the mandate proved to be useless, for the seizure of the Hills by the miners and others took place the next year and then followed the Sioux war of 1876.

During the two latter years a large immigration into the Hills was in progress and a small party was organized at Grand Forks during the winter of 1875-6. This party consisted of the following named persons: Wm. Budge, D. M. Holmes, J. S. Eshelman, Jas. A. Jenks, Geo. Fadden, Jas. Williams, A. L. McKinley, Wm. Myrick, Peter Gerard, Zeb. Hamner, Romeo Whitney, Thomas Hall, Jas. Mulligan and "Farmer Brown." The party

used Indian ponies and sleds to transport their supplies to Bismarck, and Red River carts, partially taken apart, were also sledged across the country to use during the remainder of the trip. The party left Grand Forks February 14, 1876. Reaching Bismarck, they joined a party that was made up of men from all over the country. They started for the Hills on March 21st, the whole party now numbering about fifty persons. A brush was had on the first of April with a band of hostile Sioux in which a person named Ward was killed—a brother of Oscar Ward of Bismarck—and two wounded, to wit, a man named Collins from Bismarck and Jas. Williams of Grand Forks. The party reached the Hills about April 20th. The most of the party returned to North Dakota before the close of the year, but Hall, Whitney and Mulligan are still residents of the Black Hills.\*

In 1876 Frank Viets purchased the Fadden claim near the confluence of the rivers. Next to the original townsite which it adjoins on the south, something of historic interest attaches to this piece of land. Originally it was Cady's squatter's claim and his cabin stood on the river bank about east of the city filter plant; Cady states that he sold his right to Asa Sargeant; one or two others then had possession and finally John Fadden, Sr., filed on the land. He deeded it to Mr. Viets, June 24, 1876. It would, perhaps, be difficult to describe in surveyors' phraseology any of these claims that border on the river because they comprised, not so much quarter-sections as aggregations of forties and "lots" or fractions of forties. The same year that Mr. Viets acquired this property he built upon it a hotel called the Viets house, known in later years as the Richardson house; next year he erected a flour mill and afterward had platted on the land the first addition to the original townsite.

During these six years the village had its phase of social life, conditioned by the size of the place, the character of the people, their vocations, state of the times and surroundings; in respect to the last named factor, we mean, as influenced by the river traffic and the daily stage line. The life of the place was like other western villages that are not railroad points, but which have settled down into stability and waiting. Although a frontier point, it did not partake of the usual turbulent character of such places and this was due to the law abiding nature of the majority of the residents and the potent moral influences that were wielded by a number of ladies, among whom were Mrs. Viets (who established the first Sunday school of the village in 1873), Mrs. Alex. Griggs, and Mrs. W. C. Nash. The Griggs family had brought to their hospitable home a piano which enlivened many a social gathering held there in those days.

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\* Mainly from data furnished by D. M. Holmes.

## CAUSES OF SLOW DEVELOPMENT.

Though the future was full of promise those were years of lagging progress for the village of Grand Forks. It built up but slowly and no other place had, as yet, been started in the county. In view of this, its founding in 1871 seems to have been almost premature. Nevertheless, the old timers, as we call them now, then located here seem to have possessed an abiding faith in a brighter future for the village, believing that in course of time it would rise to be the metropolis of all that part of the valley lying between Fargo and Winnipeg. In those half dozen years they witnessed the passing for the central part of the valley of the transition interval between its old and new epochs—the dying out of the old and the birth of the new.

There was then no railroad nearer than Crookston, consequently there could be no agricultural development of the county, other than on a limited scale, and its population was comparatively scant at this time. Without railroads to transport away the grain there was little inducement for settlers to come in large numbers; moreover, false impressions concerning the country were prevalent in the states that had not been counteracted. A part of this interval comprised the few years of business depression that followed the financial crisis of 1873, during which time there was but little movement of population toward the Red River Valley. Without immigration to settle and till the broad prairies to the west of Red river, the village would not be apt to make anything more than a fitful and halting progress. The timber belt in the county along the river had largely gone into the hands of speculative parties who had covered many of the quarter-sections comprising the best of it with halfbreed script, thereby snatching it away from bona fide settlers at a time when they exhibited a strong propensity to take to the timber. On the Minnesota side of the river, half of it within certain limits was covered by the old land grant of the St. Paul & Pacific railroad.

The business done at this point was then based more upon such immigration as came in those years, upon the river trade, the stage traffic and the declining fur trade than upon any actual development of the surrounding country. With the inclusion of the covering of the timber by land grant and halfbreed script we are impelled to say that it is not by means such as these that settlements anywhere in the western country have ever gotten any early and vigorous start into existence. We can farther see that, as yet, the village had not wholly emerged from the shadow of the old epoch of the valley, this departing stage of its existence seemingly tincturing with its unprogressiveness the beginning of the life of the new epoch. Yet aside from this, looking at existent business conditions as then manifested, it should be said,

that for a place of its size and population, Grand Forks was now beginning to be something of a mercantile point, prognosticating a brighter future. "Good business was done" says D. M. Holmes "by the Hudson Bay company in 1874 and '75, and by Viets in 1876 owing to there being no competition nearer than Fargo."

But better times for this section of the valley were approaching, forecasting the opening of a new era. Settlers in yearly increasing numbers were now arriving and entering their claims. In 1877 the first railroad line, of those now centering at Grand Forks, was headed toward this place. The same year Frank Viets erected a 50-barrel flour mill on his real estate property to which customers came from long distances away. This mill is still used, is a wooden structure and stands upon the river slope a little to the north of the city water-works.

## THE DAWNING OF BETTER TIMES.

### THE RAILROAD AT FISHERS LANDING.

Grand Forks is now quite a railroad center, and it is mainly owing to this status of things that this city has been able to attain its present size and population, the bands of steel radiating north and south, east and west, having been an incentive toward the establishment of manufacturing industries and commercial enterprises. Before the railroads came the place never attained to anything more than the size of an ordinary village; after their arrival the county at large began to develop rapidly, and the filling of the back country with a population whose vocation is directly or indirectly based upon agriculture, soon wrought a magic change. Simultaneously with this immigration, Grand Forks forthwith began to grow, but primarily, all that is now centered here has been rendered possible by agriculture and by railroad building in the valley, which so rapidly followed. We are here concerned only with the initiation of these matters.

Though a matter already predetermined by geographical situation and physical conditions, the development of a railroad center in this part of the valley in its initial beginning chanced to have an incidental connection with the building of the Canadian Pacific railroad. In the first place, the St. Paul & Pacific Railroad company built over a hundred miles of track down the eastern side of the Red River Valley in 1872-3, and without connection with their line then terminating at Breckenridge. The material was delivered at Glyndon by the Northern Pacific company and from that place, as a base of operations, the other company built south to Barnesville and north to a considerable distance beyond Crookston. This place was started in 1873 at the crossing of Red Lake river by this line but for several years it

made but little progress. The financial crisis of 1873 left this "St. Vincent extension" as this long stretch of track down the Minnesota side of the valley was called, unfinished; it was not connected with the line terminating at Breckenridge until 1877, nor completed to the boundary line until the close of 1879.

In the meantime work had begun on the Canadian Pacific railroad. This company proposed, where practicable, to construct the line, to some extent, in detached portions, so it was thought that it could be built east and west from Winnipeg, west from Fort William on Lake Superior, and also in Ontario and in British Columbia. Mr. Whitehead, contractor for the division east from Winnipeg, thought he could have the iron delivered at Moorhead, loaded into barges and thence towed by the steamers down the river. About the year 1875 its shipment began in that way and many barge loads were transported down to Winnipeg. But low water in the Goose rapids finally began to delay and hinder the boats. It was not an agreeable experience to the crew of a boat to be laid up there of a night with a thunder storm brewing and large quantities of dynamite on the barges in tow as a part of the freight. To obviate the delay in getting the boats and barges through the rapids, the Red Lake river was made the next resort.\*

The railroad iron was next delivered at Crookston and a few barge loads were gotten off from that point, probably during high water, for the river was not easy to navigate that far up stream.† The St. Paul & Pacific company having contracted to deliver to the Canadian Pacific road a large amount of bonded iron, it was decided to build a long spur track from Crookston to a point on Red Lake river ten miles west of that place, to which steamers with barges in tow could easily ascend. A sufficient portion of the track of the unfinished St. Vincent line to the north of Crookston to cover this distance was taken up and the rails, and possibly the ties also, unless others were used, were brought down to build this spur. This steamboat point was called Fishers Landing and it was made the river base of operations. Primarily, this ten mile branch of the St. Vincent extension was merely a railroad contractor's line, but it soon came to be used for ordinary railroad traffic in connection with the steamboating business on Red river. In the boating season the steamers run between Winnipeg and Grand Forks daily, thence up Red Lake river to the railway terminus at Fishers Landing. A stage was also run from the railroad terminus to Grand Forks. During the fall of 1877 the boats were also busy towing railroad iron to Winnipeg and flat cars and a couple of locomotives were likewise taken down the rivers. At that time a large number

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\* Statement of James Elton.    † Of John Cromarty.



of ties for the Canadian Pacific road were cut in the forest about the mouth of Turtle river and sent down to Winnipeg, the duty on them being merely nominal.\*

In the latter part of October the river suddenly froze up, by reason of which seven steamers were caught in the ice at different points on the stream. Later on, a mild spell of weather released the boats and the river was still open in December. The winter of 1877-8 was mild and open with but little snow, probably like some of those experienced here in recent years, more dry than wet, and the ground being bare most of the winter, the prairie fires were often running and burning over tracts that had escaped the usual autumn fires.

#### THE FIRST TERM OF COURT.

At this time the regular terms of court for this subdivision of the Third judicial district were held at Fargo. The commissioners of a county, could, however, under authority of the territorial laws, provide for a term of court in their respective counties outside the designated county seat of any subdivision of a judicial district, if they thought it to be expedient to do so. As yet Grand Forks had not been designated by any law of the territorial legislature as one of the county seats at which terms of district court were to be held. Hence it happened that the first term of court at Grand Forks was held by request of the county commissioners.

These gentlemen passed a resolution as follows: "Resolved, that the County Clerk be instructed to request the Hon. A. H. Barnes, Judge of the Third Judicial District, Dakota Territory, to hold a term of court in and for Grand Forks County, D. T., some time during the coming summer." This was in the spring of 1878, and D. M. Holmes was then the county clerk. He accordingly notified Judge Barnes of the resolution passed by the county commissioners, and the judge thereupon fixed April 30, 1878, as the day on which the court would sit at Grand Forks. Court was called at six o'clock on the afternoon of that day so as

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\* D. W. Luke, of Grand Forks, has related his recollections of the taking of the first locomotive to Manitoba. This account was published first in the Herald and subsequently in the Record Magazine, Dec. 1897.

"At that time [1877] the railroad stopped at Fisher and all the steamboats, of which there were several on the river, made the trip regularly up the Red Lake river to Fishers Landing. The boat on which I made the trip from Fisher to Winnipeg towed a barge on which was loaded the first locomotive that went to Manitoba. Wm. Whitehead, who had the contract for building considerable of the Canadian Pacific railroad, decided that he could work to advantage by building from Winnipeg east and so took his locomotive down from Fisher on a barge. As we neared the international boundary line, Mr. Whitehead, who was on board the steamer, went down on the barge and had his engine fired up, and as we went across the line into the queen's domains, he gave the whistle of the locomotive a succession of blasts that must have startled the natives. He said he wanted to hear the first toot of a locomotive in Manitoba." (Fishers Landing had its name changed to Fisher since 1880.)

to fix an adjournment to nine o'clock in the forenoon of May 1st, for the judge had not arrived. Judge Barnes was present the next day and the court convened at the hour set in the adjournment. There was not much business to transact, but the court record shows that a person named L. A. Barrie was admitted to bail; that A. D. Thomas of Fargo was admitted to the Practice of Law in the territory upon presentation of a certificate of admission to the bar of the state of Wisconsin; and that Ann Martin, John McRae and Wm. Budge were admitted to citizenship. Geo. H. Walsh was clerk of court.\* The court was held in a new schoolhouse that had cost \$1,500 and which stood about on the site of the present county jail.

#### THE VILLAGE OF GRAND FORKS ORGANIZED.

Early in the year 1878 the village of Grand Forks was organized and the following officers were chosen: George H. Walsh, president; Russell W. Cutts, clerk; W. H. Brown, John McRae, Wm. Budge and Frank Viets, trustees. This was the bridge over which a passage was made toward city organization three years later.

On June 1, 1878, Frank Viets and Nan his wife, as the record states, placed on file in the office of the Register of Deeds a plat of the first addition to the original townsite of Grand Forks, together with several accompanying documents, which were duly copied for record. The land comprised in this addition is described as "being on part of Lot 1, the southeast quarter of the southeast quarter of Section 3, and part of Lot 1, Section 2, Town 151, Range 50." On October 16, there was also placed on file by Walter J. S. Traill, the next addition to Grand Forks, adjoining that of Mr. Viets on the west and southwest. The platting of Mr. Viets' addition was the work of Hector Bruce and that of Mr. Traill was done by Alex. Oldham.

At this period the buildings of the village were mainly located inside of Fourth street, the one which is fronted by the court house, and did not extend north below Alpha avenue, nor south beyond the ferry, if we exclude the few scattered buildings about the old stage station a half mile above the ferry. In the main, what there then was of the village was located upon and in the vicinity of Third street. The place then showed some tendency toward compactness, rather than arranged in scattered order.

There were now a greater number of settlers arriving at Grand Forks than had been the case previously, and while many made filings on the prairie lands the majority seem to have exhibited a strong disposition to locate on the timbered streams, and during this and the following year most of these new comers occupied the line of the watercourses to the west and northwest of

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\* From data furnished by Geo. L. Ryerson, Clerk of Court.

Grand Forks, a few of them even pushing their settlements thirty to forty miles beyond this, their nearest base of supplies. The first interior roads of this county, other than the old cart trails, were those that these settlers struck out with the common farm wagon, leading from their settlements by the most easy routes across the prairies to Grand Forks. By the year 1878 a few of these settlers had began raising a little wheat and this being marketed at Grand Forks a number of barge loads were shipped to Fishers Landing and some up to Moorhead.

#### PROGRESS IN 1879.

We now enter upon a year during which it must have become apparent to the business men of Grand Forks that the then village was on the eve of marked changes for the better. Even the transition period of which we have spoken had virtually closed, but usually men are not conscious of the birth of a new epoch. What the county had most needed hitherto was immigration and railroads. The first it was now receiving to a marked degree, and the other was now close at hand. The development of its capacities would next rapidly ensue, as a matter of course. The year 1879 may be assigned as the one when the agricultural development of the county fairly began, though wheat and oats in small parcels had been raised here for several years previous to this date. In this and the previous year new business houses were started in Grand Forks and general merchandise and agricultural machinery was now being unloaded from the steamers in constantly increasing bulk. The town now had a developing back country to supply.

George B. Winship spent the later 'seventies in southeastern Minnesota. In the spring of 1877 he started a weekly local paper called the Courier at Caledonia, the shire town of Houston county. This place already had a weekly paper that had been established there in the fall of 1865; as times then were some thought the starting of another paper in the village a bold venture, but Mr. Winship was the kind of man to succeed in the long run and he continued to issue the Courier for about two years, quietly abiding his time. He was of the opinion that, after Fargo and Winnipeg, the next place on Red river destined to grow to importance would be the village located at its forks. In the spring of 1879, considering that the time had arrived to carry into effect a project already planned, he suspended the publication of the Courier and having shipped his printing outfit to Grand Forks, himself and compositor, who came with him, went to work in a hastily built board shanty, and thus was laid the foundation of the present prosperous Herald establishment. The Herald began as a weekly paper, the first number being issued on Thursday, June 26, 1879.

No act of the first board of county commissioners was needed to fix the county seat at Grand Forks. For over nine years it remained the only village, worthy of being called such, within the limits of the present county. Always the largest place in this part of the valley, business interests naturally gravitated to it as to a common center. The short term of court held the previous year, together with the fact that the territorial legislature had since then designated Grand Forks county a subdivision of the Third judicial district, expedited the building of a courthouse in 1879. The county commissioners awarded the contract for construction to Geo. H. Walsh on August 16, for \$7,800. The building was speedily begun and was completed in January following. The original building has since been enlarged and otherwise improved, fireproof vaults added to insure the safety of the records and the present county jail was also erected in 1883. Judge Barnes held his next term of court in Grand Forks beginning Sept. 18, 1879. A grand jury was sworn and the court continued in session for two or three days.

Between 1877 and 1879 the northern line of the St. P. & P. railroad was built from its halting place at Melrose, on through Sauk Center, Alexandria and Fergus Falls to its connection with the St. Vincent extension at Barnesville. For much of the way it followed the general route taken by one of the old cart trails of the long ago. On May 23, 1879, this system took the name of the St. Paul, Minneapolis & Manitoba Railroad. The St. Vincent line, running down the valley 10 to 20 miles east of Red river, was completed to the boundary line December 2, 1879, being there connected with a branch of the Canadian Pacific.

About fourteen miles of level prairie just north of Red Lake river intervened between what is now East Grand Forks and Fishers Landing. The grading of the railroad between these points was done in August and September, 1879, and the company now took the first step toward the extension of the line west of Red river, for the parties who had the contract for the grading, carried this work in October eleven miles west of Grand Forks, or to the site of Ojata. The laying of the track west, or rather northwesterly from Fishers Landing began about the first of October, and in about three weeks it was completed to the east side of Red river opposite Grand Forks. The first train, probably a construction train, came to the new terminus at three o'clock, Wednesday afternoon, October 22. A temporary station was provided by remodeling over a pre-existing building. A mixed train now began running between Crookston and the east side daily, of which Thos. Stahl was conductor and John B. Bunnell engineer. This train brought in material for bridging the river and for use on the west side. The road now open was then merely regarded as a branch of the St. Vincent extension.

In the meantime, while the river remained open that fall, preparations were in progress for building the railroad bridge, the approaches and the center pier, which was to support a draw, being constructed at this time, so far as pile driving was concerned. In December, the construction of the bridge itself, which mainly consisted of the draw, was under way, the work being facilitated by throwing a temporary trestle across the river on the ice to support the permanent structure, but the bridge was not completed so that trains could cross into Grand Forks proper during the year 1879.

There is some significance in the advent of the locomotive into a town or village previously without railroad communication. Eight years before this time the whistle of the locomotive at Breckenridge and at Moorhead had sounded the knell of the fur trading epoch in the upper valley; across the river here, a like arrival announced, both to the village of Grand Forks and the county as well, the advent of a new era.

The extension of the railroad to the east bank of the river, together with the grading west and the preparations for bridging the stream, exerted a marked influence on the business interests of the town. There was considerable building done that season and like projects were planned. The Herald made a careful estimate at the close of the season of the cost of these improvements, individually, the total amounting to \$78,785. Real estate transfers for Grand Forks amounted that year to \$66,436. The railroad was a potent factor, but it would be a mistake to attribute this increased business activity wholly to its influence alone; we should remember the hundreds of new settlers who came that year, many of whom became temporary residents of Grand Forks; moreover, the country around town was dotted with grain-stacks that fall, the farmers generally stacking their grain until they could have it threshed, and the amount of wheat in sight enabled Griggs & McCormack to contract with Barnes & Tenney of Glyndon, to deliver to them that winter 75,000 bushels. Some mail routes from Grand Forks were also opened that fall. Lastly, it should be noted here, that within the last two or three years the country at large had recovered from the depressing effects of the financial crisis of 1873, and an increasing activity was now manifesting itself in commercial affairs, the influences of which were felt here as elsewhere in the country.

As we have said, sawed lumber was not very abundant in the lower valley before the railroads came. Had there been any cause to have built up the town rapidly prior to the construction of the branch from Crookston, its people would have been hard pressed, for awhile at least, for building material. Even as matters stood, there was a prevalent scarcity of building material for a few weeks during the fall of 1879. As early as 1872, fin-



ish lumber, including sash and doors, was teamed down from Moorhead. For several years thereafter, even the brick used in building chimneys was imported. Huffman and Loon burned a quantity of brick about the year 1878, but no regular yard was started until 1880. That year Bartholomew Brothers started a yard in what is now Bartholomew's addition to the city.

Just as the year was about closing, some twenty of the old settlers of this part of the valley met in a hall at Grand Forks and on December 27, 1879, they organized the "Red River Valley Old Settlers Association." The permanent form of the association was completed February 4, 1880, about 35 persons being present at this second meeting.

At the close of the year Grand Forks had a population of at least four hundred inhabitants, perhaps over five hundred. These are the estimates of two prominent citizens well qualified to give a fair estimate of the matter, which, of course, in the absence of a census, cannot be otherwise than somewhat uncertain. The first estimate is by D. McDonald who was appointed postmaster of the village the preceding spring; the second was made by D. M. Holmes who based his estimate on the tax-list of that year and his knowledge of residents. The railroad reached the east side of the river too late in the season to materially influence the population of Grand Forks in 1879; hence the year closed leaving the place with what is usually the population of an average village.

#### THE EARLIER CHURCHES.

At this point we may as well speak of the first church societies that were organized in the county, and of the first houses of worship that these societies erected. In the west, itinerants or missionaries have generally preceded the regularly appointed pastors, holding services in private houses, schoolhouses or any suitable building large enough to hold any small assemblage of people. We can mention here only such societies as had effected something in the way of organization before the close of 1879.

The Methodists were the first to attempt the forming of a society at Grand Forks. Prior to 1878, Dakota was attached to the Northwest Iowa conference as regards the polity of this denomination. North Dakota next became part of the Red River district of the Minnesota conference, but was made a mission conference in 1884 and became a separate or full conference in 1886. A building owned by the Hudson Bay company was at first used by this society which was gathered in 1873. Rev. John Webb, who was presiding elder for the district, came that year and began a small church building, but the work lagged for a few years owing to the small number of that denomination then located here and the scant population of the place. In 1874

Wm. Curle was sent to this charge. In the fall of 1876, Rev. J. B. Starkey became presiding elder of the North Dakota district and was instructed by the bishop of his conference to look after the church at Grand Forks. The society was then burdened with a debt of \$400; this, with the assistance of the business men, Rev. Starkey succeeded in clearing up and the church building was speedily completed. With the increasing population the Methodist church at Grand Forks was now placed upon a substantial basis with a constantly increasing membership.

St. Michaels Catholic church was begun as a mission by Father Simonet in 1877. In May, 1878, Father Hubert was sent to take his place, but in July, failing health obliged him to resign his work to other hands and he went to Montreal where he died. At that time Dakota territory was a part of the diocese of Bishop Seidenbush, who resided at St. Cloud, Minn. Father Simonet was of French Canadian birth, but Father Hubert was a Frenchman from the old country. Both were elderly men, and merely looked after the spiritual wants of the few Catholics and religious halfbreeds in this part of the valley. The founding of a church they left to other hands when it should be needed. Father Hubert, however, gathered the nucleus of a society at Grand Forks. The statement often published that they worshiped for awhile in the schoolhouse is disclaimed on Catholic authority, and they, certainly, are best informed concerning the early affairs of their church here. Father L'hiver next came to Grand Forks. He was located at Yankton when assigned to his new charge by Bishop Seidenbush, and he arrived on Sept. 5, 1878. In October his society built under his charge a small framed church and modest parsonage. These were located on the corner of Sixth street and DeMers avenue, the ground occupied being the generous gift of Capt. Griggs. The parish of Father L'hiver then included all the country from Crookston and Grand Forks north to the boundary line.

The Presbyterians began their church at Grand Forks as a mission. On September 1, 1878, Rev. F. W. Iddings arrived in this field as a missionary for the Board of Home Missions of this denomination. At first, services were held in the M. E. church building, but on Sunday, April 6, 1879, the Presbyterian church of Grand Forks was organized, Rev. O. H. Elmer and C. B. Stevens being present, having come down from Moorhead to assist Rev. Iddings in organizing the church, which began with twenty-five members. Rev. Iddings was the first pastor. A church was begun that spring but was not used until the spring of 1880.

The first Episcopal service here was held at the steamboat landing and on the deck of the steamer International one Sunday forenoon in the fall of 1871. Between that time and the organization of an Episcopal church at Grand Forks was a long in-

terval. St. Paul's parish was organized in the fall of 1879, Rev. W. P. Law being minister in charge. Services were held in the halls and in the Methodist church until 1881 when a fine brick structure was erected at the corner of Fifth street and Alpha avenue.

#### THE RAILROAD BUILT INTO GRAND FORKS.

We regard the date on which any place has been connected with the outer world by bands of iron or steel as of more importance relative to local history, than that on which the first regular train arrives after the completed or constructed part of the line of road has been opened to traffic, because the arrival of the so called first train has usually been preceded a number of times by the incoming and departing of the construction trains. In track-laying these trains bring to the front the rails, ties and bridging materials, and follow up the workmen rod by rod, sometimes a furlong or more at a move and thus onward mile after mile.

The workmen were still busy completing the railroad bridge at Grand Forks in December, 1879. For the time being the weather had become pretty cold. The day on which the railroad working gang laid the rails across the bridge from the Minnesota to the Dakota side of Red river and into Grand Forks proper, is an important one for a city which owes so much of its later progress and prosperity to converging railroads, but the exact date is not now known so far as any readily obtainable records testify, nor does the memory of many different persons of whom the inquiry has been made furnish either this or the date of the first crossing by a train or a locomotive. Not even John B. Bunnell, the veteran engineer of the Great Northern, who held the throttle on the occasion of the first crossing of the bridge by a locomotive, could give any exact information as to the date of the occurrence from memory while living.\*

We shall now proceed to give the trend of events for that winter as gathered from the files of the weekly Herald for 1879-80,

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\* John B. Bunnell, who resided at Crookston, wrote to the author of this work in the latter part of April, 1898: "I am rather late in answering your letter, but I have been trying to find out from some of the old timers something about the date of the first crossing of the bridge by a train at Grand Forks. I cannot recall the exact date myself. All that I can remember is that we made the first crossing soon after New Year's day." (Engineer Bunnell died at Crookston, Minn., Sunday, July 2, 1899.)

The track of the Northern Pacific railroad was laid across the bridge at Moorhead and Fargo on January 1, 1872, though it is said that no trains crossed until June. The third crossing to the North Dakota side seems to be known with exact historical accuracy. M. H. Morrill of Wahpeton, writes: "The St. P. M. & M. track crossed the river here into Dakota July 26, 1880; at 11.30 o'clock of that day engine No. 37 crossed the Bois des Sioux bridge, and was thus the first locomotive ever in this [Richland] county."

Grand Forks was the second place in North Dakota at which a railroad crossed over from Minnesota ground.

and a few other sources of information. That winter is claimed by some persons to have been a very severe one, and probably was such as to the first half of it. There were two or three storms in December which interrupted train service to the east side of the river to a considerable extent. On one of those mornings the spirit thermometers are said to have indicated a temperature of 58 degrees below zero. In the meantime the depot in Grand Forks was being built and this was completed about January 25, 1880. The bridge was ready for the track several days prior to the middle of that month. The rails were laid across it to the Dakota side on a day between January 8th and 13th, and the track was continued out to the depot at this time. On Tuesday, the 13th, the bridge was tested. A train of eight flat cars, loaded with rock and iron was pushed across the bridge by a locomotive, and although the engine itself did not cross, the foremost car reached to Third street. A civil engineer meanwhile was noting with his theodolite the small amount of deflection in the bridge under the weight of the loaded cars. This done, the train drew back to the other side. If any trains came over soon after this, there is no record of it in the contemporary issues of the Herald. The inference is that the regular train from Crookston, with passenger cars attached, did not cross the bridge in January.

Arrangements were now made by the citizens to celebrate the advent of the railroad as soon as regular trains began running in, but the outcome of affairs chanced to be such that the matter was indefinitely postponed; nor was any such celebration ever held as had at first been planned. During January the deep snow was being blown about a great deal and it was hard to keep the road open between Crookston and Grand Forks. In the week following January 15th all effort to do so ceased, and thence onward until past the middle of March the branch lay under a snow blockade. Bright weather, however, ensued, and although no effort was made to open the road, the workmen did considerable work in the yards, using materials that they pushed over from the east side upon light truck cars. About the end of January they completed putting in a turntable about twenty-five rods beyond the depot. Side tracks were probably laid or completed about the same time.

There was considerable disappointment in not having the direct train service that had been anticipated, but as the town had never, as yet, experienced this convenience, the people generally took matters philosophically. Such protests as were raised seem to have had reference to the non-delivery of the eastern mail and not to give expression to any disappointment felt over the lack of an anticipated train service. The inconvenience caused by delays in getting the mail was particularly felt. Postmaster McDonald finally had the mail and express matter

brought over from Crookston by team; in the meantime Newton Porter got out a placard grimly advertising for ox-teams to transport freight in opposition to the St. P. M. & M. railroad.\* The papers had started to publish for Grand Forks a railroad time-table and as they did not discontinue the advertisement, the incongruity of the matter must have been the cause of many a grim joke. The stages were still running between Fargo and Grand Forks, and the attention of the people was engrossed during the blockade by their social affairs, and by several meetings of the Old Settlers. Then came the spring of 1880 with much snow on the ground still to be melted away.

About the middle of March snowplows were put to work on the branch and having cleared the road to the river the trains began running into Grand Forks regularly on the 18th of that month.† The Herald of March 25th merely says: "Trains are now running on time." The only demonstration on the arrival of the first regular train seems to have been made by Engineer Bunnell. He had acquired the ability to imitate with the whistle of his locomotive a cock's crowing, and played it in that manner when, for the first time, his engine turned wheels upon North Dakota ground.‡

James Walker, familiarly known as "Deacon" Walker, had been appointed station agent on the other side of the river. About the time that the trains began running into Grand Forks, the business of the station and "the deacon" himself were transferred to this side, and so Walker became the first station agent at Grand Forks. The location of the building that was both the original depot and freight house was then virtually outside of the town. The site was nearly opposite the present depot, but the old building was moved some little distance west when the new one was erected in 1892, was lengthened out considerably, and, in fact, since its first abandonment for station purposes in 1882 to give place to a second depot that was located a few rods north of the roundhouse, it has been used for a freight house.

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\* Recollection of Thos. F. Eastgate, of Larimore.

† This date is a recollection of Ole Melland, of Niagara township.

‡ Recollection of M. W. Spaulding, of Larimore. Some, however, state that a locomotive and cars came over once or twice, probably to deliver road materials, between the date of the testing of the bridge and the beginning of the snow blockade. This accords with Bunnell's statement, p. 93.



## PART IV.

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# THE TIMBER SETTLEMENTS.

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## THE LOG CABIN MEN.

### ATTENDANT CONDITIONS.



EARLY IN the pioneer period of this county, the way of the immigrant was down Red river, at first from McCauleyville by steamer, stage or flatboat, and a little later from Moorhead and Fargo by the same means of conveyance. After 1877, many came in by way of Crookston and Fishers Landing, or by railroad to the latter point, thence by stage, steamer or other means of conveyance to Grand Forks. Many others teamed through from distant points. In those days Grand Forks was the common gateway into the county.

As has already been remarked, speculators covered some of the timber along Red river with script. Much of the timber between Grand Forks and the mouth of Turtle river was taken in that way. Fortunately for the county these non-resident persons did not attempt to extend their operations up the courses of the smaller streams, hence it is upon these tributaries of Red river, probably without exception, that we find the location of the pioneer settlers of the inland townships of Traill, Grand Forks and Walsh counties.

The timber settlers found the greater portion of the prairie land in the county vacant and as open to the mere taking by any one class of men as by another, yet, being the first comers into the country back from Red river, and having a pretty free choice of location, they preferred making their homes on the streams and amidst the trees that cover their sloping banks and stretches of bottom land. They squatted or filed upon quarter-sections on which there was some show of timber, though their claims often included a considerable acreage of the adjoining prairie land. Claims wholly of prairie land were really more valuable in the

long run and in after years many of these men realized that they had made a mistake in their choice of a location; others, perhaps, remained satisfied.

All through the western country the pioneer settlers have usually preferred land comprising both prairie and timber; hence, in a region where the amount of timber was limited, the claims containing any would naturally be the first occupied. In the case of the Red River Valley, many of the pioneer class were emigrants from the wooded sections of Wisconsin, Iowa and Minnesota, consequently they preferred the shelter that is secured in the timber from the cold winds, and lumber not then being readily obtainable, the log cabins they erected cost but little; again, they wished to be sure of having plenty of fuel close at hand during the prospectively cold winters of this northern latitude, and still another reason that influenced some of them was that, having heard that the water of the prairie districts was apt to be alkaline, they preferred to establish their homes near the running streams.

At this early period there was an abundance of fallen timber, well seasoned in every wooded tract, which made good fuel and was useful for other purposes. In the western part of the county these timber settlements were made in advance of the government survey, and by the close of the year 1880, every quarter-section within its present limits on which there was any show of timber had its resident claimant occupying a small log cabin, whether such townships had then been subdivided or not. Thus these earlier settlers of the interior parts of this county followed up the Goose, Turtle and Forest rivers, building their log cabins in the shelter of the groves along these streams in preference to locating upon the open prairie.

#### THE GOVERNMENT SURVEY.

Before speaking specially of any of the interior settlements of the county it will be well to say something concerning the government survey of its townships. The survey of the public lands in the North Dakota side of the valley was begun in 1867. In that year a few townships were laid out and subdivided in the present county of Pembina and range lines for others were run in the valley. Between 1870 and 1876 the surveying of the North Dakota side of the valley became more general. This work was an extension of the surveys of Minnesota into this part of Dakota territory, though this does not imply that those in the Minnesota side of the valley had been fully completed.

In merely running township lines it was customary in those days for surveyors to take contracts in blocks of townships which they called "checks." A check comprised 28 townships, or a series contained in seven ranges and four towns having correction

parallels for their north and south boundaries. The township lines as then run were duly marked each half mile by stakes enclosed in pyramidal mounds about  $2\frac{1}{2}$  feet high and three or four feet square at the base. Similar mounds of earth and turf were placed at the corners of sections and quarter-sections when the townships were subdivided, the stakes being marked so as to indicate the town, range and quarter-sections. Usually it was not the custom to lay out and subdivide any series of townships in one and the same year, since this work generally involved separate contracts, nevertheless it was sometimes done. But several years—one to four—were apt to elapse between the laying out of the townships and their subdivision.

In 1870 and '71 a number of townships were laid out in this county by Moses K. Armstrong, comprising those near the river. Those in the central and western parts of the county were laid out later, G. N. Propper having contracts in 1873. By the fall of 1876 it is likely that all of the townships in the county as now bounded, had been laid out. Jud LaMoure and Wm. Ward had contracts for the subdivision of six townships in 1873, and these included the section around Grand Forks. About the same time other surveyors subdivided the townships to the north of Grand Forks. Surveyors were at work subdividing the central townships in 1876.

The last two ranges of townships in the county (55 and 56) comprising most of the Elk Valley and the part of the hill country within its limits, were subdivided during the summer and fall of 1880. Major G. G. Beardsley had the contract which also included Strabane township in range 54. Major Beardsley's expedition was made up of three parties and it left Fargo in June. Two of these parties worked outside the limits of this county, one, if not both, in the Sheyenne country. The party that came to this county was in charge of James E. Dyke, a young man who ran the subdivision lines. This party consisted of ten men, well provided with camp supplies, three tents, two ox-teams, a saddle horse, pony and cart. The teams were used for transportation in moving camp from one township to another; the saddle horse was for a messenger and the pony and cart was in daily use delivering the mound stakes. It took from five days to a week to subdivide a township. Dyke's party worked from south to north in the ranges mentioned, surveying these townships in alternate order. The survey of this county as now bounded was thus completed, having been in progress at different intervals, through a period of ten years.

In the fall the contractors turned their plats over to the district Land Office: thence they were forwarded to the Interior Department at Washington for record and approval, and when returned to the Land Office, which would likely not occur for

several months, the land was at once thrown open to settlement, and squatters and prospective settlers were then enabled to make their filings on such claims as they had already selected.\*

#### THE NORTHWOOD SETTLEMENT.

Early in the 'seventies the pioneers of Traill county, coming up from northern Iowa, from Minnesota and Wisconsin, began to push their settlements up the course of Goose river. Between 1873 and 1875 these settlements were being made in what was then a part of Grand Forks county as originally bounded. Before Traill county was created, these settlements on Goose river had been extended up the stream and into this county as at present bounded. The timber settlers, coming in from the south, took to the line of the streams in the order of their occurrence from south to north, thus it happens that we find that Northwood township contained settlers several years in advance of any of the interior townships of this county that are bisected either by Turtle or Forest rivers. Those who made these upper settlements on the Goose were Scandinavians, some of whom had emigrated to the territory from northern Iowa, or from around Northwood in that state.

The first of these settlers to locate in Northwood township were John and Lars Lindstrom. John came to Dakota in May, 1870, and located on Red river, four miles below the mouth of the Sheyenne. The Lindstrom brothers made their settlement on Goose river November 13, 1873. At that time the settlers on the river had taken the timbered quarter-sections up the stream as far as the vicinity of Mayville. Between that point and Newberg there were only a few settlers scattered along the river, and none had settled above the last named point when the Lindstroms came and made their selections of land. John Lindstrom states that when he came to Northwood township his nearest neighbor was located sixteen miles distant down the stream. But this isolation did not continue very long.

Nels Korsmo, Ole Tragethon, Halvor Solem and Anton Ostmo were settlers who came into the township in 1874. Paul C. Johnson and Andrew Nelson arrived in 1875. Andrew Sjerva, Peder Thingelstad, Hans Thingelstad, Guldbran Tandberg and Lars Thoresen were settlers of 1876. All of those here mentioned were the pioneers of Northwood township. The township lines in this part of the county had been run by the year 1876; the township was subdivided in 1877 and the land was open to receive filings by the spring of 1878; consequently the timber settlers of Northwood were squatters, and this class of settlers

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\* In part from information derived from D. M. Holmes and Major Geo. G. Beardsley. The writer saw some of the surveying that was done here in 1880, and conversed with Dyke as to the methods used in subdividing townships.

are necessarily pioneers. Others came in later and took whatever timbered claims may have been left, if any, or who began occupying the adjacent prairie lands. On still mornings the smoke from the log cabins curling upward above the trees indicated that the line of Goose river was now occupied.

The number of the timber settlers of the county were few in comparison with those who, a little later, overran the prairie lands. The first of the numerous prairie settlers of Northwood township are said to have been T. O. Midbo and sons who came in 1878. T. E. Tuffte was a settler of 1879. Knute Paulson and Erick Overson came about that time. Peter N. and Gunder Korsmo came with their father in 1874, but not being of age they did not acquire land at that time.

The nearest supplying point for these settlements was Caledonia on Red river, near the mouth of the Goose. The settlers had began raising a little wheat in 1875 and '76, and loads of it were teamed to Fargo during the same years, after being threshed by horse-power machines, but in the fall of 1877 and afterward, the grain was teamed to Grand Forks across a wide stretch of unoccupied prairie. About the year 1876, a steam flour mill was built at Caledonia, to which the Goose river settlers resorted for flour and feed.

About 1875 a mail route was established between Caledonia and Newberg, the latter being a point in Steele county eight miles south of Northwood. Here, in the pioneer days, the settlers along the headstream of the Goose received their mail. About 1880 a mail route was established between Pembina and Valley City, the Northwood settlement being made one of the local offices; but owing to lack of roads or some other cause it was soon discontinued. The mail-carrier used a span of mules which he sold to John Lindstrom on throwing up his vocation. Northwood township was organized in 1879. The original organization seems to have included the townships of Northwood, Washington, Avon and Pleasant View.\*

#### TURTLE RIVER TOWNSHIP.

In the northeastern part of the county there is a heavy body of timber between the Red and Turtle rivers, and around the mouth of the latter stream, the whole varying from a half mile to 1½ mile in breadth. This forest extends along the Marais for some distance into Walsh county. Several land entries were made in this section of Grand Forks county, now called Turtle River township, when the Land Office was at Pembina, by Thos. Campbell, William Cochrane and Angus McDonald, then residing at Grand Forks.

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\* From data furnished by John Lindstrom, Paul C. Johnson and G. Korsmo.



James M. Stoughton, an early settler of Turtle River township, who came to Grand Forks from Ontario in January, 1876, informs us that most of the timber between Grand Forks and Turtle river and for quite a distance north, was mainly taken by the speculators. There is very little timber on the west side of Turtle river, only a few groves here and there, but they reach nearly to Manvel.

The open prairie land in that part of the county began to be occupied in 1877, other settlers also coming in the next year. In the fall of 1878 a steam flour and saw mill was built near the south line of the township by August Christiani and a village was also platted there in July, 1879, which was called Bellevue. This place contained, besides the mill, two stores, two hotels, a blacksmith's shop, a post-office and a few dwellings. The mill having been burned down within a few years after it had been built, and the railroad line from Grand Forks to Neche having left the place to one side, it never amounted to much of anything afterward. No place in the county has ever attained to anything more than a country hamlet if located off the line of a railroad, since these have been built.

#### THE UPPER TURTLE RIVER SETTLEMENTS.

As a constantly flowing stream, Turtle river does not head beyond Agnes township, although several tributary coulees extend back into the hill country for several miles. The course of the stream is at first southeast to Arvilla township where it attains its most southerly bend, thence its course is northeast to Mekinock, again east adjacent to the township line between Blooming and Lakeville, and finally it takes a northerly course down the valley plain through Ferry and Turtle River townships to its confluence with Red river near the northeastern corner of the county. Between Agnes and Mekinock townships the stream is contained within something of a valley cut across the central land belt of the county; in Hegton and the north part of Arvilla townships this depression varies from a quarter to a half mile in breadth and has a depth of from 40 to 90 feet below the common prairie level. This valley is partially timbered.

The stream bisects Mekinock township diagonally. The first settlers of this township came to its valley in the spring of 1877. They were Halvor Halvorson and two sons who located near the present village of Mekinock. The next to come were the Rasmussens and Ole Graff. In the summer of the same year, Robert Blakely arrived and located in Section 21, near the middle of the township. The Sandback family also came during the summer of 1877. Fred Trepanier and Crawford Blakely came in 1878. Among the settlers of 1879 were Thos. T. Stevens, Capt. Battersby and Dr. Howard Lancaster, all of whom located in the

southwest quarter of the township. Chas. Cooper, Ebenezer Smith, John Smith and B. F. Warren were settlers who came to the township in 1880.

Robert Blakely was pretty well known during his residence in the township since he kept the post-office of the community for several years. He teamed through from Stearns county, Minn.; from Caledonia he followed the old halfbreed trail down the country to where it then crossed the Turtle a little below his place, for the crossing four miles above (mentioned page 52) seems to have been later, and to have been made by white men. During the earlier part of his residence in the county, he burned lime by collecting limestone bowlders. Later he was engaged in the same occupation on Salt coulee, south of Ojata, from which place he once took a load of lime to Grand Forks, and having lost off the bur from one of the wagon wheels, he walked beside that particular wheel so as to push it back on the axle whenever it showed any signs of working off. This was characteristic of Blakely. Ultimately, considering that the county was getting too crowded to suit his notions in regard to population, he emigrated to the Rocky mountains.

T. T. Stevens teamed through from St. Paul. In those times the "Barnesville flats" in Minnesota was a notable locality for the miring of teams during the spring by reason of the occasional cutting of the wheels through the thin prairie sod and into a sticky, whitish clay subsoil which resembled putty. Mr. Stevens states that between Barnesville and Moorhead he had to unload his wagon eighteen times in one day. He reached Grand Forks about the middle of April, 1879, and while on his journey out to Blakely's place his team was mired seven times during the first six miles in crossing the Red River flats.

In June, 1878, a party of seven men from Stearns and Kandiyohi counties in Minnesota, arrived at Grand Forks. They made the journey with ox-teams, and brought along with them their supplies and about fifty head of young stock. Learning on their arrival that the Turtle river valley was not occupied above what is now Mekinock township, and that it contained timber and a pure running stream, they decided to locate in that part of the county. Having chosen their respective claims, and erected log cabins, they began the usual round of western pioneer life. The land being in market in the central part of the county that year, they filed on their claims together at Grand Forks. At this time the U. S. Land Office was at Fargo, but filings could be made at Grand Forks through authorized attorneys acting for the Fargo office. Some of this party had families who came when they did or soon afterward. These settlers were Henry A. Morgan, his brother, Newell C. Morgan, Crawford Blakely, Edwin Collins, Oscar E. Clark, Dennis Kelley and Albert Murray.

All of these men, with the exception of Blakely, who settled in Mekinock, located in the north part of Arvilla township and were the original settlers of that township. Others who formed part of the Turtle river contingent came later and at different intervals. Geo. Hughes and August Schiebe came in the fall of 1878, E. O. Steelman in the spring of 1879, and John C. Morgan, father of H. A. and N. C. Morgan, in 1880. In March of the latter year, Frank Becker came and located near the "point of timber" about three quarters of a mile east of the Hersey mansion. Edwin Collins\* was the original settler at the Hersey place, and built his log cabin at the foot of the hill or at what is now called the Hersey grove.

Hegton is one of the Turtle river townships and is situated next north of Arvilla in Range 54. The township is twice bisected by the stream with a major and a minor crossing of the same. The first crossing of the township by the river is through its southwestern part, while the minor crossing of the same is made by a diagonal bisection of school section 36 after the stream leaves Arvilla township. A small stream called the south branch of Turtle river flows for  $1\frac{1}{2}$  miles through the southwest part of the township to its confluence with the main stream in section 32.

The settlements on both streams in Hegton township were mostly made during the year 1879. George D. Leavitt came up from Mitchell county, Iowa, in the fall of 1878 and made his selection of land along the south branch. The next spring he settled at Roach's grove, which was formerly called Leavitt's grove. Joe Carter, who was an Englishman by birth, came with Leavitt and located farther down the stream. Austin Fisch, a German, who was a hotel keeper from Grand Forks, took a claim near Leavitt's and built his log cabin down on the bottom land of the stream. John Tholin, a Norwegian, and Edward Wheeler, an American, settled near the confluence of the south branch with the main stream. Above Tholin's place along the main stream were located August Aslagsen, August Molean, Ludvic Berggren, and Axel Anderson, the latter having bought the right of a previous settler named Nelson.

About the first of June, 1879, Thomas Chrsitianson, H. E. Hanson and three others arrived from Swift county, Minn., the first two locating on the Turtle in the western part of the township, while the others passed on to Bachelors grove. Arne Anderson and Gilbert Johnson came in the spring of 1880.

There is some extension of the timber along Turtle river into the northeastern part of Elm Grove township. A few Norwegian settlers came in 1880 and made their locations here, this

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\* Collins removed to Nebraska about the year 1889, and in the fall of 1891 he was accidentally killed in the railroad yards at Omaha while employed there as a switchman.

being the last of the timber on the stream that had until that year remained unoccupied. These settlers, who were the first to locate in Elm Grove township, were Tollif Christianson, Christian Huset, Mattis Gulickson, Ole Melland and Isaac Christianson. The cabin of Melland having burned down, he took a prairie claim the next year in another part of the township, Isaac Christianson occupying his former claim on the river.\*

#### BACHELORS GROVE.

Bachelors grove is a large wedge shaped body of timber on the headstream of Turtle river, comprising about three hundred acres. It borders the stream for  $1\frac{1}{2}$  miles with an average width of a quarter of a mile and is mainly contained in Agnes township, but it has a considerable extension up a coulee of the hills and into Oakwood township. The east half of the grove, in the Elk Valley, is dense woods, chiefly of elm and basswood, with much bur oak along its upper half. The stream here is frozen up in winter and is so inconsequential, that in the summer and fall it is either dry or reduced merely to a trickling watercourse.

The residences of the present occupants of the land are situated in and around this body of timber, together with the schoolhouse and church of the community. The schoolhouse is located in the S. E $\frac{1}{4}$  section 30 and the church, which is Scandinavian Lutheran, in the S. W $\frac{1}{4}$  section 29, Agnes township, and north of the grove. The townline road between Agnes and Oakwood cuts a swath through the midst of the grove about sixty rods in length.

During the period under consideration, a large body of fine timber like Bachelors grove would not have been apt to have remained long unoccupied. Indeed, it appears that squatters located there over a month before that part of the timber along Turtle river in Arvilla township was taken, and perhaps over a year before the portion of it in Hegton township was filed upon. To the west of Hegton, Arvilla and Avon townships the land was not opened to settlement until May, 1881, consequently anyone locating upon either timber or prairie claims in that part of the county prior to that date were of the squatter class of settlers.

The earlier settlers of Bachelors grove were chiefly Scandinavians, and they came at intervals from Iowa, Wisconsin and Minnesota. First of all, there came in the month of April, 1878, Gulick and Thomas Thomson, Peter L. Peterson, James Christianson and with them a young man from Wisconsin who returned there in about three months. At first this body of timber was called Thomson's grove, from the Thomson brothers, but in the fall of 1879 when W. N. Roach opened the mail route between

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\* For settlers in Mekinock township, data furnished by T. T. Stevens; for Arvilla, Hegton, and Elm Grove the data was given during different years by H. A. Morgan, H. E. Hanson, Thos. Christianson and others.

Grand Forks and Fort Totten, James H. Mathews, who accompanied him, spoke of it as "the bachelor's grove" for the reason that at that time only one man had his family with him, and this designation of the locality passed into current use. In the spring of 1879, Gulick Thomson sold his squatter's right to James Christianson and removed to Forest river. Christianson later disposed of his acquired right to Wm. Postall. The latter in turn disposed of it to John Crawford and John Warnock in the fall of 1879. Christian Bang also became a settler at the grove that year. Others came during the same year or that following. Of these, Albert Wright, Cornelius Olson, Hans Olson, and Ever Olson occupied that part of the grove that extends into Oakwood township.

In 1880 there came to the grove or to its vicinity, H. S. Hanson, Wm. McLaren, Iver Gunderson, John Anderson, Bert. Gates, Edw. Beardsley, John Pierson, M. S. Wallace and Geo. G. Beardsley, the latter a contractor for government surveys and originally from Ohio. These later settlers were squatters, but not all of them timber men, for here we refer to this locality as a community. Those who came to the grove in 1878, passed three years here as squatters before they could make their filings on their claims. The nearest market town for all of the grove settlers during the first two or three years was Grand Forks, which is about forty miles distant. A trip to town and back, if made with oxen, was then a three day's journey.

#### SETTLERS OF OTHER GROVES.

Elm grove, which gave the township in which it is located its name, is a small body of timber containing about five acres situated in the north part of Section 19. In 1880 a squatter had built a log shack in the grove, but before the township was opened to settlement, his right was purchased by T. O. Edwards, who subsequently acquired considerable land in its vicinity.

The first occupants of Niagara township were a few Scandinavians who settled in a couple of isolated timber tracts bordering coulees in the eastern part of the township. About two miles south of Bachelors grove is Little Elm grove, a tract of about ten acres, located in the east half of Section 12. Peter Hanson located at this grove in 1879 and was probably the first settler of the township. Andrew Hanson came there in 1880.

Up the coulee west of Elm grove there is a limited amount of timber, this locality being called Whiskey creek, though there is but little water in the coulee, except at the melting away of a winter's accumulation of snow. The coulee forks about a mile above Elm grove, both branches being crossed by the main line of the Great Northern railroad, the larger fill being 52 feet high at the center. Along this coulee there settled in 1880, Knute



Hilstadt, Ole Hanson, Ole Ringstad and Sever Peterson. Three other settlers, S. Ness, Ole Moen and Arne Earness came there in 1881.

#### THE FOREST RIVER SETTLEMENTS.

Forest river is mainly confined to Walsh county but its upper reaches intersect the north part of Strabane and Inkster townships in this county. It is only with that portion of the stream in these townships that this narrative is specially concerned, for along its banks we may confidently look for the location of the first settlers of the northwestern part of the county. It should be observed, however, that Forest river was known to the trappers, voyageurs, explorers and others, and even on our modern maps, as the Big Salt, the change in the name occurring in 1878. In that year the few settlers in what is now Forest River township of Walsh county, provided for mail delivery at a post-office located in that township and along the stream, by which their mail was brought to them from a post-office in Turtle River township, distant about 18 miles, and at their own expense. It should be understood that these country offices, even to present times, are the residences of their respective postmasters, and in settlement days the offices were apt to have been log cabins. Jesse B. Warren was postmaster for these settlers. The name chosen for this office was "Forest River," which was soon applied both to the township and the stream. This township formerly included Johnstown in this county, Walsh county not then having been created.

George T. Inkster, now a resident of McHenry county, is of Scotch parentage, born on Red river at some distance below Winnipeg. His mother was a native of the country, having some Indian blood, but was nearly white. Prior to 1878 Inkster resided for awhile on Red Lake river near the present village of Mallory. Late in the fall of that year he removed to Forest river and settled in the township now bearing his name, locating in Section 12 of the same. He was the first settler of Inkster township and may be regarded as the father of it. His nearest neighbors, for that year at least, appear to have been located several miles down the stream. About 1885 he removed to McHenry county. The next settler was David Lemery who came in the spring of 1879 and took a squatter's claim adjoining Inkster's on the west. Other settlers came during the spring of 1880; these were William and Neil Mathie, Luther Dodge, James S. Collins, A. McIntyre and Clark Casey.

Strabane township is next east of Inkster, and one of those which border on the Walsh county line. The first settlers of this township were James McDonald, John McDonald and W. H. McDonald. James came first and was the first actual settler of

the township, having made his squatter's location in April, 1879, and was soon followed by the other two of the McDonald brothers. Other early settlers were Gillison Wager, Leonard Wager, Wm. Pitts, Henry Congrave, Wm. Hobbs, N. L. McEwen and Jonathan Wager, who came in 1879. Nearly all of these men were from Ontario; Pitts and his family emigrated from Wisconsin and McEwen came from New York state.

There was a post-office established at Wm. Mathie's place in Inkster township in the spring of 1880, the mail being brought once a week from Walshville. The Strabane settlers also established one in the fall of the same year, which was called Reno, John McDonald being the postmaster. The mail was brought to this office from the one in Inkster township. The Reno office was maintained until 1884, or to the time that the railroad came through that part of the county and Inkster village was started, when it was discontinued.\*

#### REMARKS ON THE TIMBER SETTLERS.

The life of the log cabin settlers of Traill, Grand Forks Walsh and other counties of eastern North Dakota, differed considerably from that of the present occupants of the soil who dwell in roomy framed houses and who are never out of reach of the sound of the whistle of the locomotive. Although this interval was comparatively short, comprising only a few years in each section that was thus represented, the significance of the phase of life presented by the timber settlements lies in the fact that it was the real pioneer period of the eastern portion of this state, exclusive of the northern boundary. While the period lasted, it furnished much the same round of life as has been usual in the west before the railroads came and ushered in a distinct phase of civilization, closely corresponding, in fact, with the earlier, but longer continued log cabin days of the older western states. In the Red River tier of counties this period approximately comprised the decade of the 'seventies but was far from beginning and ending in each section contemporaneously, as has already been instanced in the case of this county.

Usually the pioneer settlers of the middle western states have been a restless and thriftless class, though there are many notable exceptions; here, the most of them never retained their lands but few years longer than the log cabin period itself lasted. There is a class of them who have ever preferred the rough and isolated life of the frontier to the requirements and vexatious complications of populous communities, disliking the prospect of being merged with the agricultural population that later overruns the country. There were many such located for awhile along the timbered tributaries of Red river. As times changed, they one

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\* Mainly from data furnished by John McDonald, of Strabane township.

by one either lost their claims through mortgages or disposed of them to new comers and again faced toward the setting sun. Again, there were others of the original timber settlers who drifted to the new and growing towns and changed their occupation. The present framed houses and barns that have replaced the original log cabins and stables of logs, poles and straw, respectively, have generally been erected by later comers, though this has not, of course, invariably been the case.

#### THE OLD WAGON TRAILS.

The three halfbreed, or cart trails that passed through the county have been duly mentioned, but our purpose here will be to speak of those that were struck out by the settlers using the common farm wagon, in connection with the timber settlements, and which were used during the continuance of that interval. The old trails of the county, whether made by cart trains or farm wagons, were the predecessors of the present section-line roads. In regard to the county roads, four successive stages of development may be noted. First of all there came into use the old cart trails of the long ago; second in order were the trails made and used by the timber settlers and mail carriers; then there next came into use the numerous trails of the prairie settlers, and finally, the present roads were established which generally correspond with the section lines. The trails of the whites were at first such as would result from the occasional passage in the same track of the common farm wagon. After they became rutted by the cutting of the sod by the narrow wheel tires and treading of the animals used for draught, a strip of grass about  $2\frac{1}{2}$  feet in width remained between the ruts, and increased travel gradually wore even this away. At this stage of development these routes ceased to be trails and became beaten roads.

There was a trail leading from the northern outskirts of Grand Forks that bore west-by-north across the valley plain to Robert Blakeley's place in Mekinock, thence followed the prairie near the timber along the south side of the Turtle river valley and it terminated at what is now called Roach's grove. This early roadway into the central part of the county was struck out in the summer of 1878 by the Turtle river settlers. The reason of their not taking a more direct course to Grand Forks was owing to sloughy land in Chester township and danger of miring their teams, while by keeping near the Turtle river valley a more suitable and dry route was found. Two years later the direct route through Ojata was taken.

There was another trail of those days that led from Grand Forks across the south half of the county in a general southwestern direction to the Newberg and Northwood settlements. By the year 1880 this early traveled way across the county had be-

come a well beaten road, though much of the country through which it passed was then unoccupied.

There was also a wagon trail of the later 'seventies, merely rutted rather than worn, that passed through the western part of the county near the hills. It followed the western side of the Elk Valley, farther inward than the old halfbreed trail. To the west of Larimore its course lay about a mile inward from the base of these uplands but it approached much nearer to them farther north, and likely followed the halfbreed trail in places through the northwestern quarter of the county. It was an early line of transient travel between the settlements on the branches of the Goose and those on Forest and Park rivers, and was mostly utilized by persons who traveled in canvas covered wagons called "prairie schooners," such as emigrants and other roving classes commonly use. In those days the teams were generally oxen for horses were then by no means plenty even in proportion to the comparatively scant population of the country.

These, with the Fort Totten trail and Red River stage road formed the principal of the early traveled routes through the county. As the prairie settlements developed, numerous transient wagon trails of a local character were used for awhile, or until the breaking up of the land for cultivation gradually forced the most of them from the lands they crossed to the section lines. As might be supposed, any kind of trail disregarded the section lines even where, for awhile, as in the case of the prairie settler's trails, they were used in surveyed parts of the county.

#### THE FORT TOTTEN TRAIL.

The military post at the Indian reservation on the south side of Devils lake was established in 1867-8. The teaming of materials and supplies to build Fort Totten was from St. Cloud by way of Fort Abercrombie. When the Northern Pacific railroad had been built west of Red river, and Jamestown was started, the quartermaster's supplies and the goods furnished the Indians by government were teamed from that place to the post until the fall of 1879, after which the goods were delivered for awhile at Grand Forks, and later at Ojata and Larimore. The mail for the post came by way of Jamestown. As the railroad advanced west from Grand Forks, the distance that the supplies destined for Fort Totten and the reservation had to be transported by teams, was shortened.

From Grand Forks out to Blakeley's the route corresponded with the Turtle River trail. After crossing the stream by a ford at this place, the route passed west to Hanson's in the western part of Hegton township where it again crossed the stream by a shallow ford; thence bearing across Elm Grove township and passing just to the north of Elm grove, it next crossed over the

uplands through the south part of Niagara township and then passing between Smith's lakes in the northwestern part of Moraine township, it struck westward to Stump and Devils lakes across what is now Nelson county.

Something of a survey for a wagon route between Fort Totten and Grand Forks was made by the military authorities about the year 1877, but the route was not actually utilized until October, 1879, when the first of the caravans or wagon trains that came to Grand Forks, set out for that place. During that fall, W. N. Roach, in later years United States senator for this state, was residing in Grand Forks, having arrived there in September of that year. Viets & McKelvey, of Grand Forks, had a contract at that time to deliver certain supplies to the fort, and this circumstance, together with the starting of the railroad from Fishers Landing to Grand Forks, appears to have led to the establishment of a mail route between Grand Forks and Fort Totten. An organization called the Overland Mail & Transportation company, with headquarters at Washington, were then the original contractors with the government for a large number of mail routes in the west, and after some contest over the sub-contract, it was awarded to Mr. Roach. He therefore proceeded to open a mail and stage route through this county to the lake. The mail was to be carried both ways once a week.\*

Mr. Roach started out on his first trip early in October, 1879, and was accompanied by James H. Mathews. At Smith's lakes, near the west line of the county, they met the first wagon train that came east from Fort Totten and after passing them they saw no white men until the fort was reached. In crossing what is now Nelson county, they kept their course by using a pocket compass, taking a route somewhat north of that which the Indian caravan had just traveled.† Quite early in his mail and stage business, Mr. Roach took steps to have three intermediate post-offices established on the route. These were located at Blakeley's in Mekinock, at Hanson's in Hegton and one at Stump lake. In respect to the Hegton office, Mr. Roach had a conference with the settlers at Bachelors grove and some of those on the upper course of the Turtle; at his suggestion a petition to the Postmaster General at Washington was drawn up and signed by them, requesting that a post-office be established in their neighborhood and that Hans E. Hanson be appointed postmaster. In like manner Robert Blakeley became postmaster of the office in Mekinock township.

Mr. Roach did not always go with the mail stage himself, but occasionally employed others to make the weekly trips. During the first winter the carriers sometimes had to rely on the dog-

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\* In part from statements of Hon. W. N. Roach.

† Of J. H. Mathews.



sledge to get the mail through. A man named Smith kept the mail station at Stump lake and a few other settlers were located there, among whom was the old frontiersman, Francis de Molin. In December, 1879, Warren Smith, a son of the station keeper, was carrying the mail and he had with him as passengers a half-breed and a white man. They had three dogs in the train, but lost the beaten track in a storm. They killed one dog for food and one froze to death. They lay in a snowbank for about two days but finally managed to reach Molin's place, and staggering from exhaustion one or more of them fell at his door. Here they were kindly cared for until they could go on to Fort Totten. At Grand Forks the men were not heard from for some time and were supposed to have perished until a letter arrived from the fort that had been sent around by way of Jamestown and Fargo, stating that the men were safe and that the route was impassably blockaded with snow.

The Fort Totten trail was also traveled by the Indian caravans that went to Grand Forks for government supplies. The government had furnished the Indians with good wagons and oxen. Sometimes as many as fifty teams, each with an Indian driver, composed these supply trains. They traveled mostly in warm weather, camping in canvas covered tepees at suitable points on the route, and on these trips they were accompanied by an agent who used a horse and buggy. Smaller parties of of the reservation Indians occasionally passed back and forth over this route in making visits to the Red Lake Chippeways in Minnesota. A few of the old Red River carts and ponies were then still to be seen with these bands.

Mr. Roach drove a good team of roadsters with a light two seated wagon. Only an ordinary mail-bag was required. As the trail developed a few local ones were made to branch off from it leading to Forest river and Bachelors grove. At the time that the main trail began to be forced upon the section lines in consequence of the occupation and breaking of the land, that portion of it between Grand Forks and the hill country had developed into a well beaten road. With the westward advance of the railroad, the mail was discontinued in 1882 and the Fort Totten trail, as a distinctive line of travel between Grand Forks and Stump and Devils lakes, ceased to exist.

The old Red River trail, mail and stage route, though barely more than mentioned in the sketches, stands first in importance in relation to its historical bearings on the central part of the valley; the old Fort Totten trail, though brief in duration, stands next in order of all these old traveled ways.

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## PART V.

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# THE NEW EPOCH.

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## PROGRESS AND DEVELOPMENT.

### THE OPENING OF A NEW ERA.



THE BEGINNING of the new epoch in the Red River Valley was characterized by the introduction of the present civilization. In its dawn some communities had the start of some of the others. But by springtime of the year 1880 the new era of progress had so far been ushered into existence already in Grand Forks county as to have become a visible reality as reflected in the increasing business activity, in the spreading of the settlements and in the material changes that were then going on. These effected, in particular, the eastern half of the county at that time.

With the opening of direct railroad communication with eastern points, an era of progress and development began, both for Grand Forks and for the county at large. There was then no other railroad point on Red river nearer than Moorhead and Fargo, a fact that exerted a centralizing influence upon Grand Forks commercially. All kinds of business enterprises common to new western towns began to gain a foothold and flourish. Throughout that spring the baggage room in the depot was piled high with trunks, indicating a large number of arrivals. The business of the hotels consequently became more flourishing than ever before. A large transfer business sprang up between the new railroad terminus at Grand Forks and the steamboats in respect to freight and passenger traffic bound to points down the river, and a spur-track was built over on the east side to connect with a steamboat landing. The prairie lands of the county were now being rapidly occupied, thus largely increasing that year the scope of territory in which the settlers were dependent upon Grand Forks as a base for supplies. Thus the place began to increase in importance as a distributing point.

The U. S. Land Office at Grand Forks was opened that spring, and on the day of opening several hundred filings were made. By the month of June the population of the town had increased considerably over a thousand more than what it was at the close of 1879. The census taken that month gave Grand Forks a resident population of 1,705 inhabitants. There was evidence of the rapid and permanent occupation of the back country then in progress, in the large amount of settler's supplies, agricultural implements (particularly breaking plows) and machinery arriving and being sold. Lumber was also being shipped in by railroad, and was then in considerable demand for putting up claim shacks, besides what was being used to build up the town. By this time boat or pontoon bridges had replaced the old method of crossing the river by ferry.

In February, 1881, Grand Forks was incorporated as a city, and under the general laws of the territory of Dakota. The city was divided into five wards at this time, the first municipal officers being as follows: W. H. Brown, mayor; aldermen, Frank Viets and John Fadden, First ward; James Elton and A. L. Linton, Second ward; A. Abrahamsen and Henry Gotzian, Third ward; Newton Porter and Thomas White, Fourth ward; C. E. Teel and M. L. McCormack, Fifth ward.

By the fall of 1881 the city had largely overstepped the bounds it had occupied when the railroad arrived and had become a thriving place. After the year 1880 new additions to the city were successively platted. All of the common trades and mercantile establishments were well represented together with a number of good hotels. New churches were being built and the older ones enlarged. Beginning in 1879, over three years of business prosperity followed during which the city made remarkable progress. During this time the railroads were being extended north, south and west from Grand Forks.

#### SETTLING THE PRAIRIE LANDS.

During the earlier 'seventies such accounts as Gen. Hazen's adverse report on the country west of Red river together with the widely published reports concerning the ravages of the Rocky Mountain locusts in western Minnesota in 1874-5, combined with the depressed state of the times, furnish sufficient causes by which to account for the light emigration to the Red River Valley occurring in those years. But toward the close of the decade times began ripening for more general movements of this kind. Owing to various causes there were thousands of persons in the older western states ready to try their fortunes in any new and readily accessible region of the west for the purpose of bettering their condition in life and so soon as any impelling motives to do so presented themselves. People already here were writing letters

to their former homes; articles in the newspapers and later in some of the magazines began to attract notice; but most effective of all of these reports that were attracting attention to the agricultural possibilities of the Red River Valley at that time were the widely published accounts of the large yields of fine wheat raised on the large farms then recently opened in Cass county. With millions of acres of fertile lands at their choice and railroads in process of construction, thousands had now a strong incentive to come here. Therefore each succeeding year began to witness its increasing influx of immigrants.

All of the partially timbered quarter-sections in the county, as we have seen, were taken by settlers before others began to occupy the adjacent prairie lands. The settlement of the prairie lands virtually came within the period that we have called the "new epoch" and for the country back from the river it was the beginning of this epoch. Between the Goose and Turtle rivers, and again, between the latter stream and Forest river, are two widely spreading prairie sections, that south of the Turtle extending into Traill county and the other section into Walsh county. The southern section has a considerable northern projection on the valley plain due to the northeast course of Turtle river across these flats, hence the area of the northern section within the county limits is correspondingly diminished. These districts comprise the parts of the valley plain, the central slope and the Elk Valley between the streams mentioned and exclusive of the hill country. The occupation of the valley plain had been in progress prior to 1879, yet a little more than twenty years ago these prairie districts were quite generally devoid of trees or other conspicuous land marks; now, the land is considerably diversified by the numerous farmsteads with their groves of cultivated trees, but not so much so in this respect as would now have been the case had the farms more generally consisted of smaller holdings. Nevertheless, the original blank aspect of the open prairie country has been modified in no small degree.

Agriculture in the Northwest is so thoroughly dependent on the railroads that it could not be extensively engaged in at distances remote from Red river until these were built and markets created at intervals along these lines for shipment of the products of the soil. The settlement of the prairie lands took place a little in advance of the building of the railroads, settlers, in fact, readily filing upon these lands when they became assured that they would not have to wait very long for near markets.

The occupation of the prairie district south of Turtle river was carried forward from Grand Forks as a starting point, and here the movement of the incoming population was westward across the central part of the county with more deflection toward the south at that time than to the north of its medial line. As late

as the summer of 1879, filings on the land had largely been restricted to the valley plain, but in the fall of that year the taking of the vacant lands was suddenly extended west to and including range 54, beyond which the townships were not subdivided. At that period immigrants showed but little disposition to locate on any of the open prairie land as squatters until the townships had, at least, been subdivided and the corners of quarter-sections duly marked. After filing upon his claim the settler was allowed six months to get on to it and commence making improvements; the breaking season was now several months past, hence those filing on lands in Chester, Arvilla, Pleasant View, Avon, Washington and Northwood townships did not generally occupy their claims until the spring of 1880. Even at that date there was considerable vacant land in the southern part of the county and in the section between Reynolds and Northwood. This, however, did not long remain unclaimed.

In May, 1881, the Elk Valley west of range 54 was opened to settlement, also such part of the hill country as is comprised within the limits of the county. The Elk Valley was overrun by settlers that year, but there still remained north of Turtle river a district lying between Gilby and Inkster that was not generally occupied until the spring of 1882. This land, lying upon the main valley slope, is mainly comprised in Wheatfield, Strabane and north part of Hegton townships.

The settlers of the prairie districts usually put up claim shacks of pine lumber to begin with. Some of these were only eight feet square, others twelve and some 12 by 16 feet. They were merely intended for use in warm weather, to batch in for awhile, and were the veriest makeshift of an abode that could readily be put together with a few scantling, one or two window sash and pine boards. They had shed roofs and the better class of them were covered with tarred paper similar in all respects to the same kind of structures still to be seen in the outskirts of the towns. On some claims three stages of dwelling may be noted to have been developed, to wit, the original claim shack, the same rebuilt larger so as to serve awhile for winter's use, and lastly, after a few years more, the substantial framed house. Turf was sometimes piled around a well built shack in which the occupants remained a winter or two, but the veritable "sod shanty," if ever used in this county at all, was something exceptional to common usage. For the prairie farms the predecessors of the large red barns were cheap, low structures built of scantling and shiplap.

Prior to 1882 oxen were much used, especially in doing the first year's amount of breaking on the farms, not but that there were already some horses in the country, but in starting in with farming oxen were often used at first so as to save the larger expense of keeping horses until oats and other feed could be



raised for them. While being worked the oxen required ground feed, but on the whole were less expensive than horses. The ox teams were largely brought into the country by the settlers themselves rather than purchased here. They could then be bought in the older parts of Minnesota and adjoining parts of Wisconsin and Iowa at \$80 or \$90 per yoke, while in the Red River Valley they were worth from \$125 to \$150 per yoke. In 1882 horses began to be shipped into the country in large numbers and previous to that year and for some time afterwards they were rated at high prices.

#### SOME OF THE PRAIRIE SETTLEMENTS.

Gilby township is situated next north of Mekinock and amidst the prairie section lying north of Turtle river. The township is more a portion of the valley plain than of the central valley slope and is a fine agricultural township. It was first settled in 1879. Among the first or earliest settlers were the brothers George, John and James Gilby who came from Ontario. Thomas and James Lewis, George, Robert and J. W. Scott were immigrants from St. Croix county, Wisconsin. J. W. Scott broke the first full quarter-section in the township in 1880.

The prairie land in Arvilla township was very generally filed upon in October, 1879, but the land was not occupied until the next spring. There were at Grand Forks in October of the year mentioned, James H. Mathews, Prof. Webster Merrifield, John Hawkins, John Forsyth, John E. Cooley and Thos. F. Eastgate. These men had already been out and selected claims and they made their filings on or about October 6th. Other prospective settlers of that time were Geo. Bull, Geo. Ames, James Jenks, Lewis Keller, W. C. Ghering, F. D. Hughes and B. S. Fryar. Some of these men were from various counties in the state of New York. Most of the township was taken that fall, all of the fairly good quarters being filed upon that season. There were many other persons who held land in the township besides those specially mentioned. Among these were Gunder Anderson and A. B. Holte. The first held the quarter in which the First ward of the city of Larimore is now located; the other the quarter south of this. Their claim shacks stood near together in the corners of their respective claims and near the present railroad crossing; consequently these were the first buildings of any kind put up where Larimore now stands.

At first the township was called Orange, but afterward, when the Hersey farm was originated in 1882, it was renamed Arvilla after the maiden name of Mrs. Hersey. The Hersey farm comprises 2,600 acres, all adjoining and lying on both sides of Turtle river. The village of Arvilla was platted on land of this farm in May, and the plat placed on file June 23, 1882.

Another large farm that occupies the central part of Arvilla township, is that of James H. Mathews, known as the New York Farm. This grew from the original claims by the purchase of adjoining quarter-sections and others more or less detached. The first crop was grown on the farm in 1881 on land that had been broken the previous year, comprising 191 acres. Of this, 171 acres were sown to wheat and the remaining twenty were cropped in oats. In 1898 the area of the New York Farm was considerably enlarged by the acquisition of the estate of the late Geo. Bull whose land adjoined that of Mr. Mathews on the east. The buildings of the present large farm are located  $1\frac{1}{2}$  miles southeast of Larimore.

Avon township is situated next south of Arvilla. The land is generally level, with the exception of being just a little ridgy in its eastern half. It was occupied similar to Arvilla and at the same time. Among the earlier settlers were Homer D. Smith, Samuel and Maurice Swain, Alonzo and Frederick Deitz, Maurice Hines, Daniel Corkins and Wm. Hanrahan, all of whom were from the state of Michigan. Other settlers from various states were Geo. Becker, Thos. Martin, Daniel and Ira Stevens, Wm. Chailoner, Frank Challoner, Bernhard Schrupp, Albert Schrupp, John Shirley, Millard Shirley, Edwin Kerkele, Henry LaPorte, Thos. and Addison Bruyere. The two latter came from New Jersey; Addison Bruyere, who was a promising young man, died Dec. 29, 1885. W. N. Roach also took a homestead and tree-claim in Section 2, which he filed upon in October, 1879.

The extensive tract called the Elk Valley, so far as the land lies even moderately level, includes all of Northwood and adjoining parts of Washington and Lind, most of Avon and the east half of Grace, the southwest portion of Arvilla and all but the west one-third of Larimore, the most of Elm Grove and parts of Agnes, Oakwood, Inkster and Elkmount townships. This tract is rather abruptly bounded on the west by the higher hill country; on the east in the central land belt of the county, the surface breaks into low, broad ridges, the land falling thence with a gentle descent to the valley plain.

In the days of buffalo hunting the Elk Valley was a range of these animals and the elk. The great quantity of buffalo bones that lay scattered over the prairie, as seen by the first settlers, was an attestation of the fact that these animals had frequently been hunted here by the Indians and halfbreeds. The bones of single animals, as observed here by the writer in 1880, never lay together but were always strewn over a space of several rods, as dragged about by the coyotes and foxes soon after they had been killed. The most prominent of these remains, bleached by many years of weathering, were the skulls. These varied in size, the larger ones evidently having belonged to the bulls. The horns

were usually gone, their cores remaining and forming two pointed stubs about five inches in length projecting outward and upward at a small angle from each skull. The latest date at which any of the herds could have visited this section was 1868.

We have no record of the first white men who saw this former buffalo range. They were probably employees of some one of the various fur companies who followed up the courses of one or another of the timbered streams. The route of one of the geographical expeditions of Nicollet and Fremont lay close to the western border of the Elk Valley during their visit to this part of the country sixty years ago, and white men used the old half-breed trail long prior to the settlement of the county. Walter J. S. Traill, Hector Bruce and Geo. T. Inkster explored Turtle and Forest rivers in 1874. Bruce and Inkster made a second trip to the headwaters of the Forest and Little Salt in 1876.

In those days the section about the headstreams of the Turtle and Forest was a notable game country. Black bear were sometimes seen, while elk, black tailed deer and antelope were more plentiful. Otter abounded on the streams, and even the beaver appeared about the time that the first settlers came to that section, these shy animals doubtless being then on their retreat from the south before the advance of the first wave of civilization for some halfbreeds assured Mr. Inkster that the beaver had not previously been known on the headwaters of Forest river.

The Elk Valley was so named by D. McDonald, at that time postmaster of Grand Forks, and who was one of a hunting party that came out to this tract in the fall of 1879. They saw a herd of elk in the southern part of Elm Grove township near the south branch of the Turtle and being favorably impressed with the wild aspect of the land, Mr. McDonald designated it by the name it has borne ever since the year of the visit of the hunting party.

To the west of range 54 prospective settlers were generally content to await the subdivision of the townships. At the time that Larimore township was being subdivided in August, 1880, Dyke, the surveyor, expressed surprise to the writer at not finding such fine looking land wholly occupied by squatters. The first to locate in Larimore township were E. C., H. V., and H. F. Arnold. They were of a New England family but had resided in Houston county, Minn., from early in the 'sixties. Leaving that section April 10, 1880 with two wagons and five yoke of oxen they arrived at the Elk Valley May 27th and made their settlement on the 28th. They broke 155 acres that season, back-setting the most of it besides doing considerable work outside of the township. Mrs. Arnold and two daughters came early in September. H. F. Arnold went to Grand Forks in December, was offered a position by J. H. Bosard and remained through the winter employed in the office of Clerk of Court.

Several weeks after the township had been surveyed, various parties came in and put up claim shacks on lands which they selected, but none of these later comers attempted to winter on their claims. They returned in March and April, 1881, and began breaking when the proper season opened. Among these may be mentioned Albert and Ernest Hendrickson, David Dickson, Wm. Carnathan, Wm. Wilson, L. A. Brooks, S. P. Benjamin, Wm. Clone, Greeley Snyder, C. M. Williams, Richard Daely and William and Henry Schrupp.

Albert F. Clark was a settler who came from Clayton county, Iowa, and rented a place on Turtle river in the spring of 1880. He broke twenty acres on the S. E $\frac{1}{4}$  section 12 adjoining the township line that season. This is the quarter which now contains the Second and Third wards of the city of Larimore. Clark built a small house on his claim in March, 1881. This stood about on the site of the present Swain House. The quarter south of Clark's, along the north side of which is now located the depot, two elevators, sidetracks, etc., was originally the claim of a person named Patrick Donnelly, while the one west, containing most of the roundhouse, the coal-chute and adjoining railroad yards was taken by August Schiebe, previously a Turtle river settler. Samuel Whittaker came in the fall of 1881, put up a shack on a vacant claim near the foot of the hills and went east for the winter; returning in the spring he continued his residence there for over seventeen years. Larimore township was named for John W. and N. G. Larimore of the Elk Valley Farming company, and was organized in August, 1881.

Grace township is situated next south of Larimore township and in Range 55. Only the east half of the township is in the Elk Valley. The first settler was Andrew H. Tigham who settled on the SW $\frac{1}{4}$  Section 13 in the fall of 1880 and remained on his claim through the following winter. During the ensuing spring and summer many others located in the township. Some of these early comers were J. E. Lavayea and son, Henry Lavayea, (for whose daughter the township was named somewhat later on) Albert Schrupp, Iver Anderson, Andrew Kvenshaggen, Andrew Johnson, Ole Rime, E. J. Anderson, Thos. Welch, Wm. Welch, A. D. Henry, John M. Crerar and N. C. Abbott.

With the exception of a few squatters on Turtle river, Elm Grove township remained vacant through the year 1880. A few claim shacks were put up in the township during the fall of that year; then, without waiting for the land to come in market, the township was quickly occupied in the spring by numbers of settlers who began breaking as soon as the season opened. Among the settlers of the southern part of the township in the vicinity of the south branch of Turtle river there were at that time, D. P. McLain, Amidon Young, Henry Quinn, A. W. Lee, Noah Goyne,

Robert Wilson, T. H. Simms and Geo. Fadden. In the central and north part of the township there located that spring Simon A. McCanua, Thos. S. Edison, T. O. Edwards, Hiram Spade, P. McElligott, David Gorman, A. McLaren, L. L. Kylo, Medley Harting, Nels Larson, Joseph Barstow, T. W. Lane, Levi Carr, Joseph Stahl, Henry Olmstead and others.

Agnes township lies next north of Elm Grove township between that and Inkster and in Range 55. A ridge running nearly northwest through the township from Section 26 to 4, divides its area between the Elk Valley and the main valley slope, the larger part of the township belonging to the former topographical division of the county. Besides the earlier settlers in and around Bachelors grove there came to other parts of the township not earlier than 1881, J. C. McWilliams, A. P. Hall, Chas. Beatty, Wm. Ditton, Frank Kelly, James Callahan, Wm. Smith, Horatio Hulick, August Lindow, John C. Orr and Silas Burgett.

Elkmount is the most northwestern township of the county and lies next west of Inkster. Over half of its western part lies in the hill country, the remaining area of the township lying in the Elk Valley. The township was first occupied in 1880; the first land within its limits used for permanent settlement was broken in 1881. William Boutwell, however, broke a strip of the prairie sod in 1880, but abandoned it without cultivation and removed into Oakwood township. Franklin Estabrook, a prominent citizen of the township and county, settled in the valley portion of the township in 1881. Some other early settlers of Elkmount were James M. Haviland, Neil Bell, Angus Bell, Wm. McConnachie, John McConnachie and H. Ratcliffe.

#### OPENING THE ELK VALLEY FARM.

There are several large farms in Grand Forks county, but that known as the Elk Valley Farm stands at the head of the list. It was established just prior to the founding of the city of Larimore, the original townsite having been platted on two quarter-sections then but recently acquired by the Elk Valley Farming company. According to the plat-book of the county, issued in 1893, the company own between nine and ten thousand acres of land contained in Larimore, Arvilla and Hegton townships. These lands are mainly comprised within the east half of Larimore township and the west row of sections of Arvilla township where the company have about forty quarter-sections contiguous to one another, the remainder consisting of quarters that are more or less remote and detached from the main body of the farm.

In its beginning, the name of Oscar M. Towner is closely connected with the opening stages of this enterprise. But little seems to be known of the previous life of this man, though he has left his name inscribed on the map of the state. He was



presumably a native of one of the southern states and during the civil war was a soldier in one of the Confederate armies. In the spring of 1880 Towner came to Fargo and spent the early summer in looking over the country. He saw the tract of country called the Elk Valley and conceived that it was practicable to open here one of the large farms for which the Red River Valley was already becoming famous, provided that men of ample means could be found who were willing to invest the large amount of capital necessary to insure the success of so great an enterprise. Going to St. Louis, he interested several grain commission merchants of that city in the project. Towner returned in the fall and remained here until the approach of winter. At the close of 1880 all there was to be seen on the site of the present headquarters of the farm, located one mile southwest of Larimore, consisted of two claim shacks which Towner had caused to be put up in September of the same year.

The Elk Valley Farming company was incorporated under the laws of Missouri in 1881. The company as originally organized, consisted of John N. Booth, Thos. Booth, John W. Larimore and N. G. Larimore. J. W. Larimore was president of the company. O. M. Towner was appointed superintendent of the farm.\*

During the latter half of the winter of 1880-81 a great body of snow accumulated on the ground and lasted until the middle of April. While the snow still remained, or in March, 1881, extensive teaming operations began in hauling lumber, brick, farming implements and machinery, feed, provisions, etc., from the terminus of the railroad, then at Ojata. At that time W. N. Roach entered the service of the company as accountant. As the spring opened the erection of the present buildings that constitute the headquarters was begun. Although there was much building done that year there has been considerable alteration, addition and enlargement in this respect since that time. Mules were shipped up from Missouri and a large amount of breaking was done during the season of 1881. No crop was raised on the farm that year other than flax, millet or whatever could be sown upon new breaking. From time to time members of the company made visits to this section. John N. Booth and John W. Larimore came up in the summer of 1881; N. G. Larimore made his first visit in June, 1882 and took up his residence here in 1889. The farm grew by the accretion of purchased quarter-sections until it soon attained nearly its present dimensions.

The first regular crop from the farm was harvested in 1882, this having been a fairly good year for cereals. Owing to the non-residence of any of the members of the company and through other causes, it happened that in 1881 and the early part of '82

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\* From statements of Clay and N. G. Larimore.

O. M. Towner or Col. Towner, as he was commonly called, was an ever present and overshadowing personality in the section around Larimore. His management of affairs not proving wholly satisfactory to the company, he was succeeded by Clay Larimore who came up in 1882.

#### RAILROAD DEVELOPMENT OF THE COUNTY.

Of the 150 miles of railroad, more or less, that are comprised within the limits of the county, by far the greater proportion belongs to the Great Northern system. The first rails were laid in the county, as we have seen, in January, 1880, and all of the lines owned and operated by the above named company, so far as contained in the county, and not including the trackage of yards, sidings and passing-tracks, were all built before the close of 1884 and have been greatly improved as regards the road beds, tracks, buildings, etc., since that year.

The railroad development of the county fairly began with the warm season of 1880. Patrick Brennan, an experienced track-layer, had charge of the laying of the rails of the Great Northern system, then the St. P. M. & M., in this part of the state, and on the main line he had charge of this work as far west as Minot. During the summer the track was extended from Grand Forks out to the site of Ojata, covering the grading that had been done the previous fall. At this temporary halting place of the road the village of Ojata was begun. The place was laid out by John J. Cavanagh who had it platted in September, 1880, the plat being placed on file on the 30th of the same month. This was the first place in the county to be begun on a railroad line and as a result of the construction of the same. At first the village was called Stickney but this name was changed to Ojata in February, 1881. The end of the track remained at this point from July, 1880, until the latter part of October, 1881.

The line from Moorhead and Fargo to Neche by way of Grand Forks was begun about the time that the grade out to Ojata was being ironed. The grading on this line, north and south from Grand Forks, was carried on in both directions from that point, but only a part of the road between that city and Fargo was ironed in 1880. During the fall of that year the track was laid from Grand Forks Junction (which is  $3\frac{1}{4}$  miles west of the city) to a point between Grandin and Argusville in Cass county. That part of the line from Grand Forks to Hillsboro was opened to traffic that fall. About the first of May, 1881, through connection was made with Fargo and the first passenger train from that city came into Grand Forks on Sunday afternoon, May 9. In the fall of 1881 the track on the line north from Grand Forks was laid to Grafton, reaching that place toward the close of December.

Work was again begun on the main line in June, 1881, and during the fall the track was laid about 18 miles west of Ojata, which brought the road to Larimore. This place had began to get its first start about the middle of October, though it was not till the first half of November that as many as a dozen buildings were completed or under way. Building operations were in progress when the tracklayers reached this place on the afternoon of November 22d. Nine days were next occupied in getting things ready for traffic about the terminus, including the completion of a depot and freight house when this extension of the main line was opened to business by the arrival of the first regular train, which also brought the first mail, Sunday morning, December 1, 1881.

At this time the Northern Pacific company were building a branch north from Casselton which was begun in 1879. The track reached Mayville in October, 1881, but the grading was carried as far as McCanna that season, though not wholly completed at all points. It had, however, been completed through Larimore and for several miles beyond by the time that this place was started. But the N. P. company never ironed the grade farther than Mayville. While this work was in progress the St. P. M & M. also graded a line northerly from the Larimore townsite to Forest river. Larimore remained the terminus of the main line until September, 1882, when the track was again started westward, but only reached Bartlett that year, being completed to Devils Lake during the summer of 1883.

The Casselton branch of the Northern Pacific was acquired by the St. P. M & M. company in June, 1882. In 1884 the grade between Larimore and Mayville was ironed and the north line was also built the same year as far as Park River. A large amount of railroad iron was brought to Larimore that year and the laying of both tracks was carried on from this point. Track-laying on the south line began Monday, June 23, and one week later, Monday, June 30, a separate working gang began track-laying north from the Park River Junction, about  $2\frac{1}{2}$  miles northwest from Larimore, where the track diverges from the main line. In July, 1884, work was in progress in this county simultaneously on both the north and south lines from Larimore.

In 1887 the Northern Pacific company extended a branch of their system through the northeastern quarter of this county. This passes through Grand Forks, thence runs nearly northwest to Mekinock and Gilby and north through Johnstown and beyond the county limits. The villages named were platted that year as a result of the building of this line through the county. The portion of this road that is contained in this county amounts to about 34 miles. Since its construction there has been no new lines of railroad built in this county.

## THE BOOM YEAR.

Each passing year since 1877 had witnessed constantly swelling waves of emigration toward the Red River Valley. These movements next took on what for those emigration years was their final phase. This, in a large measure, was produced through extensive advertising of the country by agents of the railroad companies, townsite boomers and persons interested in real estate transactions. These efforts to attract attention to the country just at the time the most of the valley had already been taken, though not very far developed as a whole, and when the country was beginning to be ramified by railroad lines, culminated in the great immigration wave of 1882. Hitherto the settlers had largely come from Minnesota, Iowa, Wisconsin and even from Ontario. Now, New York, Ohio, Michigan, Indiana, Illinois and northern Missouri became prominently represented. These immigrants could now reach the valley directly by railroad and many of them shipped here, along with their household goods, stock, particularly horses, and farming implements.

Conditions were such during the earlier half of the year 1882 as to produce a stage of development and phase of life entirely different from anything that the country had witnessed previously or has experienced since. More land was being broken and building done on the farms than in any previous year; a large amount of eastern capital was then being sent into the country to be invested in land and other real estate securities; these facts, with railroad building, platting of townsites on these new lines, town building and increased mercantile transactions combined with the rapid increase of population, all conspired to invite and even precipitate the boom of 1882. And so it has come to be remembered as an historical year.

The city of Grand Forks built up rapidly that year. Some of the more notable buildings then erected were the Catholic church costing \$30,000; the Grand Forks Roller Mills, the cost and equipment of which amounted to \$40,000; a fine and costly residence built by Capt. Alex. Griggs; the Citizen's bank; the White Elephant elevator; the second depot which was a wooden structure 24 by 80 feet that stood alongside the line to Neche, a few rods to the north of the roundhouse; then there were as many as 138 residences erected that season varying considerably as to cost. The same year the city was bonded in the sum of \$15,000 for waterworks. These were located in Viets' addition and upon the river bank, the water being drawn from Red Lake river, the most pure of the two streams. Real estate transfers for the city of Grand Forks amounted that year to \$1,502,741. At the close of 1882 the population of the city was estimated at 5,000 inhabitants. In three years Grand Forks had gained in population by

as many thousands as previously there had been hundreds. The gain in population for the whole county that year was both sudden and enormous. Real estate transfers for the whole county footed up to \$2,670,878, the largest aggregate ever reached here.

The Larimore townsite was platted by Alex. Oldham during the fall of 1881; the plat, however, was not dated until March 13, and it was placed on file by the townsite company March 29, 1882. For the most of that year Larimore was the terminus of the railroad, which was then called the "Devils Lake branch," although intelligent persons saw, with the advance of the surveyors and graders toward the lake, that this was another continental line aiming for the Pacific coast. Large numbers of immigrants landed at Larimore that spring, rapidly overran most of the hill townships, while numbers of others pushed on toward Stump and Devils lakes. A daily stage line was opened to the lakes that summer in advance of the building of the railroad and "Adler's" and "Wamduska" became well known stations on the route. Larimore temporarily became the outfitting point for the country lying beyond and business boomed. There was also a large amount of teaming done. During the spring and early summer the town built up rapidly in what is now the central part of the city. It was expected that the rails of the Casselton branch of the Northern Pacific would arrive before fall, and the location of some of the buildings was made in accordance with that supposition. Late in June the building boom was checked by a report that the Casselton branch had been sold to the St. P. M. & M. company, together with a disastrous fire that occurred early on the morning of the 29th and destroyed a number of new buildings on both sides of Towner avenue and mainly in two blocks. The burned area was soon rebuilt.

At that time the public lands in the county, more, perhaps, than in any previous year, were in process of being rapidly transferred from government possession to that of individual ownership. This also was a factor of the times, and it involved the transaction of a large amount of legal business. Hence, "land offices" sprang up in the new towns to facilitate the location of settlers on new lands, in making final proofs, in examining contest claims, and in assisting in the sale of lands upon which settlers had already made their final proofs. In the matter of final proofs and contests these offices were intermediary between claimants and the U. S. Land Office of the district. Every lawyer from the east entering upon his profession here found that he had to familiarize himself with both the laws and all of the details of land office business, thus entering, so to speak, a new legal world. Moreover, the newspapers then being started in the new towns did a thriving business in publishing innumerable final proof and other legal notices.



Another circumstance that pertained to those times was the facility with which ordinary social conditions reached an organized or settled state of affairs. As we have said, the immigrants were gathered from different states and from various parts of the same. Here they came in contact with people similarly gathered but who had been longer in the country. Each person, to a considerable extent, knew nothing of the previous life of his neighbor. But the social reserve of the older states was readily thrown off and new acquaintances and friendships were as easily formed. In the evolution of society in the new towns, business relations, but more particularly the newly organized church societies, were the principal factors.

#### THE HILL COUNTRY.

That part of Grand Forks county which extends to the higher plateau west of the proper limit of the Red River Valley, comprises the townships of Loretta, Logan, Moraine, Niagara, the most of Oakwood and larger half of Elkmount, all of which border on the Nelson county line; in the next range of townships east of these the larger part of Lind, half of Grace, the western third of Larimore and the southwestern part of Elm Grove lie upon the slope of the uplands, the remaining portions of these townships being part of the flat land of the Elk Valley.

In the fall of 1881 the settlements had advanced westward to the base of the uplands and some filings were also made that year on these lands. The first settlers in Moraine township were Samuel S. Smith and a companion who located at Smiths lakes that fall on the Fort Totten trail. In the spring of 1882 this township was occupied by settlers chiefly from Michigan and New York state and at the same time many who were from western New York made their locations in Niagara township. The village of Niagara, near the west line of the county, was started the next year, the village plat having been placed on file May 4, 1883.

Thus the settlement of the county practically reached its conclusion, progressing during its last year or two with accelerated rapidity. The last portions of the county to be occupied were its northwestern and southwestern townships, comprising parts of the hill country. If we take the year 1878 for the time when the first general advancement west of Red river had its beginning in this county, we find that the westward progress of civilization occupied four years in reaching what is now its western boundary, having advanced at the average rate of ten miles per year.

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## NOTES.

### NOTE A.

Page 2.—There is a long gentle slope, or descent of about three hundred feet from the Elk Valley to the valley plain. Eight to ten miles west from the river the surface formation beneath the topsoil gradually changes from lacustrine and alluvial deposits to boulder clay, thus forming a sort of geological boundary. Between this boundary and the foot of the actual slope is an expanse of till, which differs from the boulder clay of the higher land only in having its surface nearly flat. The change of the surface from the flat valley plain to the main valley slope is hardly perceptible, the one form of the surface imperceptibly merging into the other. However, Upham notes that the first rise of the surface on the railroad line occurs between Ojata and Emerado, about  $13\frac{1}{2}$  miles west of Red river. Altitude, 865 feet, or 35 feet higher above sea-level than Grand Forks. No topographical map of the county has yet been published, this feature having been neglected in the plat books and other maps.

### NOTE B.

Page 43.—In all of the extant literature concerning the Red River Valley the writer has never met with any statement relative to the time when the last buffalo was seen within its limits, though stories of buffalo hunting and stampedes are abundant in print. The point mentioned has some importance historically. D. M. Holmes who came in 1871, states that no buffalo were ever seen in this county since his arrival here. S. C. Cady says that he killed buffalo between Fort Abercrombie and Fort Ransom in 1868, but is of the opinion that they never ranged as far east as the Red river during that year. John Lindstrom, speaking of the portion of the valley south of Goose river, notes that the last buffalo seen in that section was killed in 1867. Geo. B. Winship states that while teaming in the valley in 1868, he occasionally heard reports of buffalo being seen in the region about the headwaters of Turtle, Forest and Park rivers, but that they never ventured as far east as the valley plain that year. It is fairly certain that if any of these animals came into the western side of the Red River Valley as late as 1868, none were ever seen anywhere within its confines later than that year.

### NOTE C.

Pages 59, 60.—According to the recollections of R. M. Probstfield, Nicholas Huffman was born in a small village of Rhenish Prussia, in either the county of Malmedy or of Montjoie, district of Aachen (Aix la Chapelle) about the year 1839. The family of which he was a member, came to this country in 1854 and settled in St. Anthony, Minn. After the siege of Fort Abercrombie, in 1862, Huffman went to St. Cloud, where he spent the following winter. Returning to the valley in the summer of 1863, he worked for David McCauley. In the spring of 1864, he came to Georgetown, and worked for a firm who had leased the International of the Hudson Bay company so as to transport the company merchandise between Georgetown and Fort Garry. The winter following 1864 to that of 1865 he was in partnership with Reuben Messer who kept a trading station at Georgetown, buying furs of the Indians and trappers. The winter of 1865-66 Huffman, Messer and others were in the region of the Coteau des Prairies trading with the Indians, and the party barely escaped perishing of starvation and exposure to storms. From that time until he entered the employment of W. C. Nash, he remained around McCauleyville and Fort Abercrombie, working for David McCauley and others.

R. M. Probstfield came to the Red River valley in the spring of 1859, at the same time that Capt. Northup's steamboat expedition did, though he was not a member of that party. He settled on the Minnesota side of Red river about four miles above Georgetown, and his name is linked with the history of the upper part of the valley. During Huffman's residence in the valley, Mr. Probstfield knew him intimately as a close friend, and the following brief tribute to his memory, from the pen of the latter, is worthy of permanent record: "A nobler, more disinterested, tender-hearted, and scrupulously honest fellow, I have never known. He was a deep and independent thinker, but so unostentatious that most of those who knew him superficially, took him for a coarse, illiterate, common-place fellow. He was, in fact, a precious diamond in the rough, unground, uncut, and unpolished, as society would express it. His memory will ever be dear to me."

The spelling of his name in this work has been according to the form used in connection with "Nick Huffman's Story." Record Magazine, Oct. 1896; but Mr. Probstfield informs us that the correct form was Nicolaus Hoffman. Also that August Loon, the associate of Hoffman, was Gustave Loon, the last name being the translation of the French L'huan, "the loon." He was a Canadian Frenchman and remained around Grand Forks until about 1880, when he removed north and located on Red river near Acton.

## NOTE D.

Page 60.—It appears from statements made verbally to the author by W. C. Nash of East Grand Forks, that he held the sub-contract of Blakely & Carpenter for carrying the mail between Breckenridge and Pembina in 1868, and employed Hoffman and Loon at first, but after about two years he turned the business over to Hoffman. In the fall of 1871 the stages took the mail. Mr. Nash also stated that he still has the original papers in his possession that relate to the matter. The author is aware that there must be many such records in the possession of private parties, which, in the coming century, are likely to become of considerable historical value. All such documents having any historical bearing on the Red River Valley should be carefully preserved.

## NOTE E.

Page 61.—The letter of Stutsman concerning the naming of the Grand Forks post-office in 1870, was given, Mr. Cady states, to the Old Settlers Association. R. M. Probstfield thinks the name to have been in use for nearly or quite 100 years, both himself and S. C. Cady stating that it is from "le grand fourche" the French of the voyageurs and trappers for "the great forks."

## NOTE F.

Page 61.—James J. Hill, president of the Great Northern Railway system, was born Sept. 16, 1838, on a farm at Rockwood, Wellington County, Ontario, of Scotch-Irish parentage. He obtained his early education at a seminary at Rockwood kept by a Quaker. His first start in life was the spending of a year as clerk in a local store. Some years before the civil war he came to St. Paul, then a place of about 5,000 inhabitants and started in there as a laborer on the levee, but he soon acquired a clerk's position and familiarized himself with the transportation business. During the civil war he took an active interest in the conflict, forwarding men to the front. Thence onward his career has been from warehouseman to railroad magnate.

## NOTE G.

Page 79.—Edwin V. Holcomb died suddenly in St. Paul on the evening of Nov. 26, 1899. The purchase of the last of the real estate owned by the Hudson Bay company in Grand Forks was made in December, 1879.

## NOTE H.

Page 106.—Geo. T. Inkster was born at Seven Oaks, now just outside the limits of the city of Winnipeg. His mother was born near Hudson bay and was closely related to the last earl of Orkney. Among Mr. Inkster's early recollections is that of hearing his father relate that he could trace some descent from the Vikings who conquered and settled a part of Scotland called Orkadia. Mr. Inkster selected his land on Forest river sometime prior to removing to that section. He located there about Sept. 1, 1878, his idea being cattle raising and mixed farming. Speaking of game toward the head of Forest river, he writes: "The first winter I was on Forest river I could find elk in an hour's ride anytime. Black tailed deer were very plentiful and I often killed them in going across country to Grand Forks for supplies." In August, 1882, he removed to the Mouse River country, taking through the first bunch of cattle that was brought into that part of the state, and going there by way of Fort Totten.—The pinnated grouse, or prairie hen, followed civilization into the Northwest and were found on the borders of the settlements. Mr. Inkster states that the first he saw of these birds in this county were some near Grand Forks in 1879.



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